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THE CARPENTER OF NAZARETH

THE CARPENTER OF NAZARETH

A STUDY OF JESUS IN THE LIGHT OF HIS ENVIRONMENT AND BACKGROUND

By

CASPER S. YOST

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By

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TO

MR. E. LANSING RAY

PREFACE

"Jesus of Nazareth," says Albert Schweitzer, "will not suffer himself to be modernized. As an historic figure he refuses to be detached from his own time." This is true. And as an historic figure he must be viewed within the setting of his time if his personality and his mission are to be rightly understood and fairly appraised. "The thing we need primarily," says Rufus M. Jones, "is an enlarged capacity of appreciation of the range and quality of his personality. We need once more to *see* him." But we cannot see him clearly in isolation. He was necessarily a product of his age and race. His personality and his work were necessarily influenced by his environment. He had to deal primarily with the people and the circumstances of his day. A knowledge of his environment, therefore, of the conditions of life in his time, is essential to an understanding of the man himself, as well as of what he said and did. Moreover, it is an important aid to a clear view of him if we know something of his historical background, particularly of the spiritual sources of the religion which he taught and embodied, for, as Dr. Fosdick says, "His originality was rooted in the past and drew from it the very sap that made the fresh growth possible." But all this is hardly enough if we are to see Jesus in true perspective, for he should also be seen in relation to the consequences of his life and labors.

It has seemed to me desirable that all of these essentials of "visibility" and of understanding should be brought together within as brief compass as possible in order that all the requirements for the comprehension and fair appraisement of Jesus as an historical figure might be brought within the range of vision in a single view. This is what I have endeavored to do in this volume. I have tried to present a concise statement of the social, economic, political and religious conditions of the time, in the Roman Empire as a whole, in Palestine in general and in Galilee in particular, together with the characteristics of Jewish life in that period. I have attempted also to trace briefly the development of the Jewish religion from its Mosaic origin to its status

when Jesus appeared. Then, with this foundation of environment and background, I have endeavored to present a realistic but reverential study of the personality and ministry of Jesus in harmony with this view of his surroundings and his spiritual heritage. After that I have tried to show the consequences of his life in the development and progress through the succeeding ages of the religion which he founded; and finally to venture some reflections on the relation of the whole matter to the needs of the present day.

This has been, of course, a large undertaking, and no doubt it has been an audacious one for a layman, but it has been a delightfully fascinating diversion over a number of years. And the fact that it is the work of a layman, one long accustomed as an editorial writer to the analysis and interpretation of events, may give it a certain freshness of treatment and of view that I hope will not be unattractive. I have endeavored to make the work historically accurate, and in the study of Jesus particularly I have sought earnestly to perceive the truth and to present it truthfully, but I shall be agreeably surprised if no errors are found in it. I mean by that errors of fact. Errors of opinion are of course matters of opinion. The "life" of Jesus—apart from the perhaps venturesome effort to account for the thirty years preceding the beginning of his ministry, necessarily conjectural—is based almost wholly upon the Synoptic Gospels, in sympathy with the moderate and constructive conclusions of modern criticism. And finally, it is my hope that this book will be a contribution, however small, to the strengthening of rational faith. That indeed is its chief purpose.

I am indebted to Rev. Dr. Geo. A. Campbell for his constant encouragement in the writing of this book. It was at his suggestion that the final chapter was added to the original plan.

C. S. Y.

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SECTION I

ENVIRONMENT AND BACKGROUND

Chapter I

IN THE BEGINNING

For more than thirteen centuries most of the civilized world has measured the progress of all time from the birth of a child. It has divided the history of mankind into two parts, that which occurred before this birth and that which occurred afterward. In the one division all history led up to and terminated with the birth of this child; in the other all history looks back to it as its starting point. And this is not merely a convenience of historical chronology. It applies to all the activities of daily life. The calendar every day proclaims its relation to this birth. Every letter that is written, every promissory note that is made, every check that is signed, every contract, every announcement, every law, every treaty, bears in its date a recognition that so many years ago a particular child was born and that the world has never been the same since. In all the ages of life on this planet no other human being has ever been so honored, no other man has so commanded time, as he whose birth is thus almost universally commemorated in the common, everyday customs of many nations, including the world's greatest.

But then no other man since the beginning of time has made such an impression upon the processes of time, upon the development of civilization with the advance of time, as the man whose birth is thus signalized. History presents the names and achievements of many men who have led mankind in new directions or to new heights, but none comparable in character, purposes, or accomplishments with this man, Jesus of Nazareth. These are facts of history that cannot be seriously questioned, whatever may be one's view of the nature of that personality or of the religion which he founded. The imprint of the historical Jesus rests upon every page of history succeeding his advent. Directly or indirectly he has influenced the course of history through almost twenty centuries, and still that influence persists, un-

diminished by the progress of human thought or human achievement. Therefore it is appropriate that time, and the history that proceeds from time, be measured by reference to his beginning.

It does not matter that the year of that beginning has never been precisely determined. That old Roman monk, Dionysius Exiguus, who in the sixth century initiated this measurement, erred somewhat in his calculations. Jesus, as everyone now knows, was not born in the year 1, but several years earlier, the fact that he was born during the reign of Herod, who died in 4 B.C., as we must reckon it, making this certain. That his life began about four years before the opening of what is termed the Christian Era seems to be a favored estimate of most scholars, although some would place it still earlier.

And the place and circumstances, as well as the time, of his birth have been subjects of much inquiry and controversy. Despite the positive statements in the Gospels of Luke and Matthew, some modern scholars are inclined to the belief that Jesus was born in Nazareth, and that the stories of his birth at Bethlehem are legends growing out of Old Testament prophecies and doctrinal developments in the primitive church. They attach much importance to the assumption that the census referred to by Luke could not have taken place during the reign of Herod, when Rome had not yet taken over the direct administration of Judea; and to the historical evidence that Cyrenius was appointed governor of Syria by Augustus in the year corresponding with A.D. 6, some ten years or so after the birth of Jesus. They also regard it as incredible that Joseph would have been required to go from Nazareth to Bethlehem to be enrolled for taxation. In support of their view they cite the statement by Mark,[1] the earliest of the Gospels, that Jesus went into his own country (Nazareth) which Moffatt translates "his native place," and also to a similar statement in Matthew,[2] similarly translated by Moffatt, which if so translated is a direct contradiction of the explicit assertion in Matthew's account of the visit of the three Wise-men.

[1] 6:1.
[2] 13:54.

However, the weight of tradition and of record seems to sustain Bethlehem. Apart from the casual statements in Mark and Matthew mentioned above, the interpretation of which is debatable, all of the primitive writings which touch upon the subject are quite positive as to Bethlehem as the place of the birth of Jesus. Matthew, in beginning the story of the Magi, says, "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea," as if it were a fact too well known and beyond question to require further comment. And it is worthy of consideration that Luke, after the introduction to his Gospel, wherein he declares the complete trustworthiness of the facts he is presenting to Theophilus, immediately gives his account of the Nativity with Bethlehem as its scene. As both of these Gospels were written in the generation following that of Jesus, while some who knew Jesus personally no doubt were still living, when quick denial and disproof of an untruth of such a nature could have been expected, it seems incredible that the statements of Matthew and of Luke could have been wholly wrong. Moreover, that Jesus was born in Bethlehem appears to have been a settled conviction, not subject to debate, among all the earliest writers. While apocryphal writings of the first and second centuries touching upon this matter are for the most part unworthy of credence, their common agreement upon such a physical fact as the place of birth of Jesus is a point of no little worth in support of the truth of the canonical Gospels in this particular. Nor can it be said that those writings, while probably later than the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, base their accounts upon them. On the contrary, they differ widely from the narration of Luke in important details, and seem rather to have been derived from independent sources of tradition.

Furthermore, it appears that the early "Fathers" of Christianity, contentious over details as were many of them, accepted the birth at Bethlehem without question. For example, Justin Martyr —that learned and intellectual Christian who was beheaded by the benevolent philosopher, Marcus Aurelius—whose time on earth was close to that of Jesus, and who while of pagan parentage was himself born in Samaria, but a few miles away from the City of David, says that Jesus was born in a cave near

Bethlehem.[3] And Jerome sought what he had no doubt was the birthplace of Jesus, there to draw inspiration for the great work of his life, the translation of the Bible into the Latin, which was to be for many centuries the chief source of knowledge of that book, New Testament and Old, among the Western nations. Surely it would seem that if Jesus were not born in Bethlehem some question would have arisen among those who knew him, those who first wrote about him, and those who led in the development of Christianity in the immediately succeeding centuries.

But what of the census which Luke makes the occasion of the journey of Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem? Archaeological discoveries in late years have thrown new light on this question. An inscription found at Antioch in Pisidia indicates that Cyrenius (or Quirinius, as his name appears in Roman records) was twice governor of Syria, the first time for a period that may have included the time of the birth of Jesus.[4] And it appears from a rescript found among the priceless papyrus manuscripts unearthed in Egypt in recent years that the statement of Luke that "all went to be taxed, everyone into his own city," expressed what was perhaps a usual requirement of the periodic enrollment for taxation under the Imperial Roman system of taxation. This is an edict issued by G. Vibius Maximus, Roman governor of Egypt, A.D. 104, saying: "The enrollment by household being at hand it is necessary to notify all who for any cause soever are outside their homes to return to their domestic hearths that they may also accomplish the customary dispensation of enrollment."[5] These discoveries tend at least to support the accuracy of Luke's statement as to the census. And after all, the burden of proof rests upon those who deny the birth at Bethlehem in contradiction to record and tradition.

It must be conceded, of course, that the Gospel records, apart from the introductory chapters of Matthew and Luke, manifest no interest in the subject. They leave no doubt that virtually the whole life of Jesus was spent in Galilee, that he grew up from infancy in Nazareth and apparently knew no other home

[3]Dial. Cum Tryph., pp. 70-78.
[4]Deissmann, Light from the Ancient East, p. 5.
[5]Ibid., p. 270.

until after the beginning of his ministry. In short, Bethlehem had no influence upon his life, and so far as he was the product of his environment it was the environment of Nazareth and of Galilee, not of Bethlehem, that contributed to the development of his personality.

Yet what would the world have missed if Luke had followed the example of the Gospel of Mark—which doubtless he had before him, whether in its present or an earlier form—and confined his narrative to the ministry of Jesus! For surely no chapter of the New Testament has had a greater or more beneficent influence upon humanity than his story of the Nativity. About his living picture of the advent of Jesus have assembled the tenderest, the purest, and the holiest thoughts of mankind. It has tended greatly to the development of higher conceptions of the sacredness and the beauty of motherhood. It has been a constant inspiration to art and to poetry. It has promoted the concentration of thought and of sympathy upon the problems of childhood. It has thrown something of the halo of divinity about infancy in all circumstances. In it may be discerned the far-off beginnings of the social emancipation of women, for in the estimate it placed upon one woman, and the reverence for her that it engendered, it helped to create a higher regard for womanhood in general. And but for this story there would have been no Christmas, with its annual outpourings of love and sympathy that are a constant spiritual refreshment of humanity.

Indeed, it is well that Luke, with the sure instinct of genius, made the birth of Jesus the occasion for one of the most beautiful and moving stories in all literature. And it is well that he alone of the canonical writers attempted to tell it. For it is clear that no one of the others could have told it with such masterly simplicity, and such exquisite tenderness. However skeptical one may be of the supernatural manifestations with which he embellishes it, one can hardly read his account without a thrill of admiration for his artistry.

Nor would it be half so attractive or half so appealing without those embellishments. Believe them or not, they give to the event an impressive splendor that stark realism could not pos-

sibly have accomplished, and make it a fitting prelude to the incomparable life which was to follow. And if we measure that event by its tremendous consequences to the destinies of mankind, and assume that heaven has any interest, or any part, in the progress of human affairs, as we must if we are to attach any importance to the teachings of Jesus, the inauguration of this life must have been a matter of extraordinary concern to the supernal hosts, whether its manifestations were visible to the shepherds or not. At any rate, the light, the angelic choir, and the anouncement were quite appropriate accompaniments of the story, the elimination of which would reduce it to the bare and dry bones of history.

Moreover, the world would have lost something of real inspiration if they had been omitted. They proclaimed it an event of joy to the world, and truly it has proved to be, although the gloomy doctrines of later development tended to nullify this. And they also proclaimed as of divine origin the principle of "peace on earth, good will toward men," the supreme value of which, both as a principle and a phrase, the world is at last beginning to realize. All this could never have been presented to us in such impressive and world-pervading form if Luke had left it out of his account.

It is also to be remarked that Luke uses the supernatural in the story with dignified reserve. He makes it, so to speak, a divine background to the chief fact, the birth of a child in what is otherwise the most humble, the most unpretentious, and the most inauspicious of circumstances. It was an event with which he as a physician was peculiarly familiar, for here was being enacted the mystery that is common to all the experience of mankind, and Luke in his account of the birth itself, the parturition, does not make it in any way different from other births. He, as it were, takes his pupil, Theophilus, by the hand and leads him before a babe in a manger, that he may know the man, Jesus, from his beginning, and perceive there his essential humanity. There were no supernatural manifestations about that manger. It was divinity enough, and mystery enough, for Luke that a child was born in the way all children are born. It was far out upon

the hills that the shepherds saw a great light and heard angelic strains of music. One must read the extravagant accounts of the birth of Jesus in the apocryphal narratives, particularly the "Protevangelium of James" and the "Gospel of the Infancy of Jesus," to appreciate with what intelligent reserve, and with what artistic as well as religious insight, Luke utilized the supernatural elements in his narrative.

But historically the chief value of the story lies in the fact that it records the beginning of the man upon whose life and character and teachings the thoughts and aspirations of mankind have been concentrated for nineteen centuries as upon no other man since time began. And it is the only respectable record of that beginning. Neither Mark nor John speaks of it. Matthew tells of a miraculous conception, as also does Luke, and he gives us the charming story of the Wise-men and the star, but about the birth he says nothing. In the apocryphal accounts the supernatural is so predominant that they have no historical merit at all, and only their agreement upon Bethlehem as the scene of the birth is of the slightest importance to the student of history. Luke alone presents an intelligent and relatively conservative account, and unless one accepts it, with or without reservations, the beginnings of Jesus must be left absolutely to conjecture.

In recent years not a few of the scholarly writers of biographical studies of Jesus have chosen to ignore the Gospel account of his birth, or to dismiss it from consideration with a brief reference to it as purely legendary. This attitude would reduce Luke's narrative of the advent to the rank of the fairy tale, and if universally accepted would destroy the inspirational values of one of the most beautiful pictures ever drawn by the hand of man. The world cannot afford to scrap that story and throw it into the wastebasket of inconsequential things. And it is not fair to Luke, in view of the generally dependable character of his writings both in the Gospel and in The Acts. He is in a sense a historian, more of a historian, indeed, than any other of the writers in the New Testament. His introduction to his Gospel testifies to his keen concern for the literal truth. "That thou mightest know the certainty of those things wherein thou hast

been instructed,'' he says to Theophilus in explaining his reasons for writing. And he was writing too close to the events he records to leave much room for the development of legend. Moreover, the birth of Jesus was in itself an event of supreme importance in the world's history, too important to dismiss the only record of it with an airy wave of the hand. No account of the life of any man can be historically complete that does not begin with his beginning, and if the life of Jesus did not begin at Bethlehem, as Luke and others record, then the historian is forced to rely upon conjecture, which is not history. In short, men may, if they please, doubt the heavenly vision, doubt the angelic choir, but they cannot doubt the babe in the manger at Bethlehem without utterly rejecting the only historical record in existence that bears upon it and searching the imagination for a substitute, which, again let it be said, is not history.

So, therefore, one who wishes to begin at the beginning, the most momentous beginning in human history, is justified in asserting that Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the latter years, probably the last year, of the reign of Herod, and that (still following the account of Luke) he was shortly afterward taken by Joseph and Mary to Nazareth in Galilee, where he grew to manhood.

Chapter II

THE WORLD OF JESUS

What a world it was into which Jesus was born! Nothing comparable with it had ever been known before. Nothing comparable with it has even been seen since. Rome had just reached the zenith of its power, after a prolonged series of civil wars that brought the republic to an end and enabled Augustus to establish an empire which stretched its length from the Atlantic to the upper reaches of the Euphrates and from the Rhine to the Sahara Desert. Virtually all of the world that mattered in the development of general civilization had been brought under the rule of a firm and efficient power. All countries within that vast territory had ceased to exist as independent political units, and their boundaries had become little more than conveniences of administration. The supreme authority for all government rested securely in Rome, there to remain for centuries to come.

For the first time in the progress of mankind the world was united and consolidated. The welding, to be sure, was not yet finished at this time, and many adjustments were yet to be made, but within the lifetime of Jesus civil unification was virtually completed and the basic principles of control of the colossal political structure were established and in operation. Alexander, it is true, accomplished something approaching this spread of dominion and unity of government, but it was a personal achievement that fell to pieces with his death. The Roman Empire was fixed by Augustus on enduring foundations.

And although its dominion was attained by force it was not maintained by force. Force was at hand, of course, and always impressively potential. But except for protection from invasion by the barbarian beyond its borders it was little used and little needed save in the preservation of civil order. Insurrections where they arose were suppressed with prompt and merciless thoroughness, but these were comparatively rare occurrences. It

did not take most of the nations long to learn, first, that the power of Rome was too great to oppose with any hope of success, and, second, that its rule was, for that age, singularly mild and materially beneficial. For Rome's genius for organization had devised a system of control that interfered as little as possible with national or community administration, that respected the private rights, the customs, the traditions, and particularly the religions, of its subject peoples. It demanded and obtained the tribute it exacted; it demanded respect for, and submission to, the representatives of its authority that it appointed, and it punished violations of its decrees or rules with rigorous severity, often with extreme cruelty. But usually its requirements were not difficult to meet, and apart from the sting of subjection to an alien power, its sway was not tyranny. On the contrary, it was remarkably lenient and tolerant compared with the customary attitudes of government in its time. In short, most of the people within Roman dominion found that their welfare was better promoted and sustained, their persons, property and even their individual liberties better guarded, than ever before.

The consequences of this political unity, with its firm and generally equitable administration, were tremendous and unprecedented. First of all, peace was established throughout the empire. War, of course, did not cease. The barbarians beyond the border required occasional military expeditions. There yet remained some sections in which rebellion occasionally arose, notably in Palestine. But these were matters of protection from outside foes, or the preservation of order within, which the legions attended to with efficiency and dispatch. The many nations which made up the empire and among which war was an immemorial habit now warred with one another no more, for now they were component parts of one empire, and any differences between them were settled by Rome. The elder Pliny's phrase, "the boundless majesty of Roman peace," was no mere figure of speech.

And with peace came prosperity. Trade began to flourish. Commerce found the whole world open to it, with no national barriers to overcome. The Romans themselves had little talent for commerce and little desire to engage in it, but they encour-

aged it and profited enormously by its development. The Roman Empire in the age of Augustus was alive with business. In every town and city industry thrived. There were markets for all wares. The trade routes which Rome was already making broad paved highways, for military as well as trade reasons, streamed with caravans laden with the products of the fields and the shops, the forests and the mines. The Mediterranean became a "Roman lake"; piracy which had found rich prey upon its waters for ages was destroyed, and the vessels of a free commerce rapidly grew in number and in tonnage.

All of this created wealth, and wealth created unexampled splendor in the great centers of population. Augustus is said to have boasted in his latter years that he "found Rome a city of brick and made it a city of marble." That, of course, was not literally true, but it expressed in a phrase the growth of the capital in architectural magnificence. And the chief cities throughout the empire emulated Rome in this, and in other particulars. Alexandria, next to Rome the greatest city of the empire, and long the center of Hellenic culture, had suffered from the civil wars which ended the Roman republic, but now its older glory was renewed, and private building construction was a conspicuous activity of the time throughout the empire. It was a rich and busy world into which Jesus was born and in which he passed his life.

But the finer aspects of the age were more Greek than Roman. Three centuries before this, Alexander had laid the foundations of a great empire that, although it was soon to lose its political unity, never lost the essential qualities of the Greek civilization which he established in the lands of Asia and in Egypt. More than that, Greek culture had invaded and conquered Rome long before the legions of Rome had subdued an enfeebled and decadent Greece. Greek art and Greek thought had given much of their own color to the life of Rome, while in the vast territory over which Alexander had spread his empire Greek civilization remained as dominant under Rome as in the days of the Seleucids and the Ptolemys. In short, the "glory that was Greece," con-

siderably diluted, was absorbed in the "grandeur that was Rome." One physical result was that Greek architecture and ornamentation prevailed in the new construction as well as the old, although somewhat modified in buildings, particularly in the West, by the development of the Roman arch. The theaters and gymnasiums, which adorned every city of the empire, were, of course, of Greek origin and character, and the baths which Roman civilization contributed were usually Greek in their architectural features. Moreover, Greek ideas were the predominating influence of culture throughout the Roman Orient, except in Palestine, and of no little influence there. Perhaps of even greater importance, the Greek language was the common instrument of interracial communications and the common vehicle of literature in all of the lands east of Italy. Roman power, Roman organization, Roman law and justice, and the ubiquitous Roman tax-gatherer prevailed everywhere, but Hellenic civilization ruled the peoples, Palestine again partially excepted, and indirectly ruled Rome.

The age of Augustus was the Golden Age of Roman literature, stimulated by the influence of the new era that dawned with him. Virgil and Horace, the greatest of the Roman poets, had but recently passed from the scene when Jesus was born. Ovid was writing his elegiac verses that centuries later were to inspire a Shakespeare, and Livy was still engaged in the composition of his great history. Strabo was completing his quaint and invaluable "Geography." Seneca, whose philosophical writings were to make his name imperishable, was born perhaps in the same year as Jesus. The Golden Age of Grecian literature was long past, but it took on new life and new form in this period, with Alexandria, the intellectual center of the world, its chief source of production; and Philo, a contemporary of Jesus, was engaged there in applying the ideas of Greek philosophy to the religion of Judaism. Not since the days of Pericles had literature received such an impetus as in the early Roman Empire, and while little of it was comparable with the great classics of Greece, it was more voluminous and more widely read than ever before;

for literary taste and learning were more diffused and the means of gratifying such tastes more generally distributed than in any previous age.

It was, indeed, in many respects the greatest age in human history into which Jesus was born, and none who lived in the last years of the reign of Augustus and the first of the reign of Tiberius could have imagined that he who was to make it incomparably the greatest age was then growing up in the diminutive province of Galilee.

But there was a dark side, a very dark side, to this resplendent world. The economic basis of the Roman Empire was slavery. "In whatever direction speculation applied itself its instrument was without exception man reduced in law to a beast of burden. Trades were in great part carried on by slaves, so that the proceeds fell to the masters."[1] Slaves tilled the ground, often in chains. "Agricultural implements," wrote Varro, in the generation preceding that of Augustus, "are divided into three classes —vocal, as slaves, semivocal, as oxen, and dumb, as carts." Most of the meaner labors, and some of the higher, were performed by slaves. Public works, particularly road building, were the tasks of slaves. Much of the mining was done by slaves. Actors in the public dramas were usually slaves, as were the gladiators in the arenas. In the Roman household all the work was done by slaves, who sometimes included managers, secretaries, accountants and even physicians and teachers.

Nor, although slavery was most conspicuous in Rome, where wealth was more highly concentrated, was it absent anywhere in the empire. Slavery had always existed in Greece and the countries of Asia and Africa. Even among the Jews it had been common from the earliest days. Gibbon estimated that in the Roman world in the time of Claudius there were as many slaves as free inhabitants.[2] Other estimates give a much higher proportion of slaves in this and earlier times. Certain it is that they numbered many millions.

[1] Mommsen, History of Rome, Vol. III, p. 307.
[2] Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, Vol. I, p. 90.

Nor were these slaves drawn mainly from barbarian races. On the contrary, the majority of them were men and women of civilized countries, Grecians, Egyptians, Syrians, Jews—indeed, every country of the empire, as well as some beyond its borders, contributed to the enormous total. No small number of them were equal in cultivation, refinement and intelligence to their masters, and many of them were superior in these qualities. Yet as slaves they were mere chattels, subject not only to sale at will but to any ill treatment that whim or passion might prompt, without any recourse to law or justice. Until a time much later than this the slave owner could kill a slave without punishment or reproach. The slave possessed no rights and was given no protection from the brutality of his master.

Before the empire brought peace to the civilized world the main source of supply for Roman slavery was military conquest. Captives in war were usually enslaved, whatever their race. The noblest blood of Greece, of all of Alexander's dominions, flowed in the veins of many Roman slaves. But the long peace inaugurated by Augustus put an end to this supply, except as to the outer barbarians, and now and then the fruits of internal insurrection. For a long time, however, the number of slaves was but little diminished; births among slaves, deliberately encouraged by their masters, the punishment of slavery inflicted upon freemen for various offenses, and the captives of slave raiders maintained the supply.

Slaves, to be sure, were often humanely treated, but this depended entirely upon the dispositions of masters, and not upon any prescription of law or publicly accepted principle. Most of them were cruelly oppressed. It is true also that many slaves were given their freedom or were permitted to obtain it by various means, and not a few of such freedmen were able to secure positions of honor and profit. But these instances were relatively uncommon.

Naturally and necessarily, the vast substructure of slavery was an impediment to free labor, which can never compete successfully with slave labor. This effect was not so marked in the East, where slaves were proportionately fewer, but generally it con-

tributed to the extreme and almost hopeless poverty of the laboring classes in the midst of boundless wealth. And in Rome itself it created a constant and urgent problem of unemployment, which compelled the expenditures of enormous sums to provide food for the starving inhabitants.

Moreover, the world into which Jesus entered was morally and spiritually bankrupt. It was a world permeated with moral corruption, conspicuously so in high places, but so prevalent also in the low as to be the rule rather than the exception. That, of course, is not to say that it was universal. Doubtless there were millions of men and women throughout the empire who were honest, kindly and virtuous. Happily for mankind it has never been, and can never be, wholly bad. Nevertheless, lowered standards of integrity, widespread vice, often unspeakably gross, and cruelty were outstanding characteristics of the age. All this was more pronounced in the city of Rome than elsewhere, for evil always concentrates and flourishes most in great centers of population. "From the whole compass of the widespread empire," says Mommsen, "people flocked to Rome for speculation, for debauchery, for intrigue, for training in crime, or even for the purpose of hiding there from the eye of the law."[3] Paul in the first chapter of Romans presents a vivid picture of the moral depravity of Rome that contemporary pagan evidence shows was not overdrawn. But such cities as Alexandria, Antioch and Corinth were not far behind the capital in the extent and forms of vice. And the excesses and cruelties of Herod prove that even Palestine in his reign was not exempt from the prevailing depravity and inhumanity, although it is probable that the highest moral standards of the days of Augustus were to be found in the lofty ethics of Judaism, disseminated from the Jewish synagogues that flourished in every city of the empire.

The appalling inhumanity of the Romans was in strong contrast with the numerous beneficences of their rule. Few men of this age, however unfeeling, could witness without horror and disgust such slaughter of human beings as was a common occurrence in the amphitheaters of Rome and the great cities of the

[3]History of Rome, Vol. V, p. 368.

empire. In the capital such sanguinary spectacles were given ostensibly to gratify the wishes of the people. "Bread and blood" were regarded as essential to appease the appetites of the populace, and these were given freely. But the members of the highest society gave the encouragement of their presence and support to the unspeakable brutalities of the arena, and even such men as Cicero betray a singular lack of human sensibility in their references to them. And the innate cruelty of Rome was further expressed in its peculiar method of execution by crucifixion, perhaps the most inhuman form of capital punishment ever devised by civilized man.

Moreover, Jesus was born into a world in which religion was unstable, shifting, decadent. The old faiths of paganism had lost much of their power and much of their attractiveness. The national gods were no longer held in common reverence. Almost everywhere they had fallen into disrepute with the loss of national boundaries and identities. There was a generally prevailing skepticism among the literate and intelligent, who found an intellectual substitute for religion in some form of the current philosophies. The masses of the people, more or less infected with the skepticism of their superiors, became relatively indifferent to the old deities and the old altars, and a prey to the innumerable superstitions that, freed from local habitations, infested the empire. Indeed, even the intellectuals, who contemptuously rejected all the gods as myths, entertained superstitions that a balanced rationalism would have despised. Belief in magic, in one form or another, was almost universal at a time when disbelief in, or indifference to, the fundamentals of ancient religions distinguished almost every people except the Jews.

The primitive religion of the Romans rested upon shadowy foundations, but it was artfully utilized to promote integrity of the individual and of the home, and devoted service to the community. It contributed mightily to the development and progress of Roman power. But when in the early days of the rapidly expanding republic the Romans became enamored of Grecian literature and art, they borrowed somewhat of Grecian religion, and more of Grecian philosophy, the one corrupting while the

other weakened the old faith of Rome. For while Greece gave to Rome many of the finest elements of its civilization its religion was already decadent, and that which Rome borrowed and fused with its own quickened its imagination but lowered its standards. More importantly, this opened the door to new importations of religious ideas and practices. Rome, long intolerant of any religion but its own, under the influence of philosophical skepticism and the gross materialism which attended its growth in wealth and luxury, first reluctantly and then indifferently permitted the development within its home territory of religious ideas and practices that were, with some exceptions, morally enervating. The mystical and ecstatic religions of Egypt and Eastern Asia found numerous followers within the precincts of the capital itself, and their rites, their orgies, and their superstitions affected all Roman life. The old gods were not abandoned. On the contrary, Augustus had built new temples and fused new life into their rituals, and it was centuries later that the gods of Rome were finally extinguished; but Roman religion had become a barren formality, its flesh remaining but its spirit gone. In short, while Rome was gaining the whole world it had lost its own soul. Nor could it be redeemed by its philosophies. Stoicism touched high points in ethical precept, and sustained many a fine mind with the nobility of its principles, but it lacked the vital elements of religion, and the materialism which it fostered was a quenching influence upon the spirit of all religion while it was no impediment to the growth of the basest superstitions.

That which had reduced the spiritual level of Roman religion, never high but never without sturdy virtues, came from Greece, from Egypt, from Syria and Asia Minor. The picturesque mythology of Greece with its humanized deities had lost much of its hold upon the popular imagination, and the old Eleusinian and Orphic mysteries had been weakened by the invasion of grosser oriental rites and worships long before this period. The decline of Greece from its ancient glory was in no department so marked as in that of religion, and it was these exotic forms, together with its decadent primitive faiths, that Greece had passed on to Rome. The pernicious brood of the Phrygian Cybele,

the "Great Mother of the Gods," had carried far and accomplished much in the spiritual degradation of the empire, but perhaps not more than the Egyptian cults of Isis and Serapis. Mithraism, the best of the lot, which was to become for a long period the chief competitor of Christianity, was barely beginning its Western development when Jesus was born, and deification of the emperor was yet but tentative.

But, with all this, religious aspiration was not dead. On the contrary, it was never so urgent and active. The disintegration of the older religious systems created a demand for new ones. Humanity in every age requires a religion of some sort, but never in any age was a dependable religion so desperately needed or so fervently desired as in this, which saw an almost universal crumbling of the ancient faiths. The civilized world was like a ship that had parted from its moorings in a storm and was seeking a port, any port, for a firm anchorage. It was this need, and this yearning, that facilitated the spread of the so-called mystery religions, which appealed more to the emotions than to the reason, which aroused insistent curiosity by the rigid secrecy of their rites, and which offered both hope and consolation to their initiates. And they were not wholly bad. Sensuous and debasing as they were in the grosser aspects of their symbolism, they contained the germs of high spiritual ideals. In particular they gave currency to the thought of a direct and individual communion with deity, and to new and inspiring conceptions of a life after death. But they were burdened with the ritual excesses of primitive naturalism, they were based upon more or less fantastic myths, and they were associated with superstitions and practices often repellent to decency as well as to intelligence. There is much reason to believe, however, that they performed a useful service in preparing the soul of humanity for the higher and purer religion of the heart and of the mind that was to rise upon the personality and the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth.

Chapter III

THE COUNTRY OF JESUS

The land in which Jesus was born, and in which his life was spent, occupied a very small space in the geographical spread of this vast empire. The total area of Palestine was no greater than that of the state of Vermont, and but little greater than that of Wales. And even this small country was not a political unit in the time of Jesus. It was so under Herod, and had been so under the native Asmonean rulers for a century, but after the death of Herod it was divided into three tiny provinces, namely, Judea, which included Samaria; Galilee, together with Perea, on the east side of the Jordan, the ancient Gilead; and a group of districts without a common name, east of the upper Jordan and Lake Galilee. Each of these was separate from, and politically independent of, the others, but all subject to Rome, and each was ruled by a direct or indirect representative of Rome who was not a Jew. The "tetrarchs," Herod Antipas and Philip, professed the Jewish faith, but they and their father Herod, and their grandfather Antipater, the founder of the Herodian line, were Idumeans, sons of the Edomite race which for ages had been the enemy of the Jews, and the attachment of the entire Herodian family to Judaism was a superficial matter of political expediency rather than of principle.

In the social sense, however, and by predominance of population as well as historical relation, Palestine as a whole was the land of the Jews. And as a division of the Roman Empire it was not as obscure or as unimportant as many writers say or imply. On the contrary, it occupied a strategic position as a political element of the empire. Standing as it did at the eastern extremity of the Mediterranean and athwart the great highway that connected Egypt with Syria and the lands of Mesopotamia, it was a possession of considerable commercial as well as military importance, and eminently practical Rome so regarded it. A land

that on occasion compelled the personal presence of the supreme rulers of Rome, from Pompey to Hadrian, in order to insure and to maintain Roman power over it, could hardly have been regarded as obscure or insignificant. And no land within the empire gave these rulers more trouble to keep in subjection. Between 65 B.C. and A.D. 150, when Hadrian finally crushed the politieal life out of the Jewish nation, there were few years when Palestine was not a subject of serious consideration in the councils of government at Rome.

Yet this Palestine, when Jesus was born, was a product of recent development. It is a mistake to suppose, as perhaps most biblical readers do, that the land of Jesus was much the same as the land of David. Except in geography, and to some extent in that, there were wide differences. One who in turning the pages of the Bible passes from the Old Testament to the New is apt to assume that the one is a continuation of the other, with no material lapse of time between them. Yet the book of Malachi, which ends the Old Testament, was written more than 400 years before the events described in the Gospels, and the last historical books of the Old Testament, Ezra and Nehemiah, deal with occurrences in the fifth century B.C. There is thus a great gap, a chasm, of time between the Testaments, a long period on which the canonical books throw no light, and which for the most part is enshrouded in darkness.

Of the apocryphal books Maccabees I and II illuminate a few tremendously important years; Josephus casts some rays into the blackness of these centuries; a little knowledge is reflected from the chronicles of other countries, and much may be reasonably inferred from these scraps of information, but on the whole very little is known of events in Palestine during this period, and virtually nothing of the first half of it. Moreover, that which is known applies almost entirely to the southern portion of Palestine, to Judea. For Judea had been all that was left of the land of David and Solomon after the destruction of the northern kingdom of Israel in 721 B.C. At that time Samaria and Galilee and the Hebrew region east of the Jordan disappeared from history.

Most of their Hebrew inhabitants, or at any rate the best of them, were taken into captivity by the Assyrian conquerors, and their country was peopled with heathen from various parts of Assyrian dominions. Such Israelites as remained there ceased to figure in the annals of their race, except as those who mingled with the heathen settlers to form the mongrel Samaritan tribe came into contact with the Judeans, who persistently despised them. Most of the history of the Israelites recorded in the Books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings deals with events in this northern portion of Palestine which was much the more important until David came into power, captured Jerusalem and made it the capital. But between the Gospels and the biblical history that refers to this part of Palestine there is a gap of over 700 years, and not until the last 150 years of this long period is any light thrown on the state of its inhabitants. It is known that they remained subject to Assyria until that great empire was overthrown by the Chaldeans at the end of the seventh century B.C. Soon afterward, in 586 B.C., was terminated the southern kingdom of Judah, by Nebuchadnezzar the Chaldean, and thereafter all of the inhabitants of Palestine, including the Judeans, were subject in succession to the Chaldeans, the Ptolemys of Egypt, the Seleucid monarchs of Syria, and lastly, after almost a century of independence, to Rome. But in Judea, and in Judea alone, the Hebrews—or the Jews as they gradually came to be called—maintained their racial unity and predominance, and held fast through the centuries to their religion, though with many vicissitudes. It was not until the second century B.C. that Judea recovered its ancient independence through the heroic rebellion led by Judas Maccabeus and his stalwart brothers, and these warrior leaders and their immediate successors restored the ancient glories, and in large measure the ancient territory, of the race, Galilee becoming again a Jewish province about 100 B.C.

But at the time of the Maccabean struggle the number of Jews in Galilee was so small they were all brought to Jerusalem for safety.[1] This is true also of the country east of the Jordan, for Josephus says that Judas "gathered all the Jews in Gilead to-

[1] 1 Macc. 1:23.

gether"[2] and took them into Judea. Subsequently, however, with the establishment of Jewish control over the northern region, great numbers of Jews must have emigrated to Galilee, for undoubtedly the Jews predominated in the large population there at the beginning of the Christian Era, as shown in the New Testament and in Josephus. It was, therefore, only a short while before the time of Jesus, not more than three or four generations, that Galilee became again a country of the Jews. It was for them relatively a new country. Their race had possessed it and occupied it seven centuries before, but that was a long way back through years that were silent.

But obviously those silent centuries were not unproductive. Enough has already been noted to show that they had been years of tremendous changes in the fortunes of Israel. The waves of all the great civilizations, Assyrian, Chaldean, Persian, Egyptian, Grecian and Roman, had rolled over them, and they had left their impress on the land as well as on the people. Assyria, Chaldea, and Egypt had contributed largely to that great dispersion of the Jews over the face of the earth that has distinguished that peculiar people ever since, and that in the time of Jesus gave importance to the race that it could not have had if confined to the limits of Palestine. Persia seems to have made an impression upon its thinking; but above all, Grecian influence and Grecian power had for over 300 years affected in one way or another the conditions and the life of Palestine. Whether under the Macedonian monarchs of Syria or of Egypt, Hellenic civilization pressed upon Palestine, and less directly but in some ways more effectively it continued under the Roman domination. There were times in this period when even the religion of the Jews was near to extinction under the always subtle influence and sometimes the arbitrary power of Grecian rule. Possibly it might have been destroyed in Judea, where alone in Palestine it feebly survived at the time, but for the desperate and apparently hopeless uprising of the Maccabees, which was caused perhaps as much by the apostasy of Jewish leaders as by the tyrannical and cruel efforts of Antiochus Epiphanes to extinguish the Jewish worship.

[2]Antiq. XII. 8-5.

Nevertheless, Hellenic culture flowed over Palestine as over all Syria, although less effective in Judea than elsewhere, and Hellenic enterprise and constructive art had made their marks upon the land. In the land of the Jews east of the Jordan had been erected a group of flourishing Greek cities, whose pagan inhabitants probably knew little and cared little about the ancient history and associations of the region. These cities of the Decapolis had been conquered by John Hyrcanus, one of the Asmonean princes, and incorporated within the Jewish state, but Augustus restored them to their former independence, and in the time of Jesus they stood scornfully apart from the land of the Jews, which surrounded some of them.

The remains of several of these cities still attest their splendor, and Gadara, one of them, is celebrated by Strabo for its contributions to Hellenic science.[3] Moreover, the Herods themselves, particularly "Herod the Great," delighted in building cities, palaces, theaters, gymnasiums, and baths within the Jewish territory under their control, giving to the most conspicuous public buildings of Palestine, even the temple at Jerusalem, the Grecian character then prevailing in all of the architecture of Western Asia. And, of course, the uses to which these buildings were put, the temple excepted, were in accord with the Graeco-Roman customs of the time. All of this was more or less repugnant to the stricter Jews but obviously many of the Jewish people found them attractive and participated in the public amusements which they afforded. There were many Greeks or Greek-speaking Gentiles in Palestine, particularly in Samaria and Galilee, and the Greek language, which was the common speech of the Roman world eastward of Italy, was in current use in the land of Jesus among the ruling and trading classes, though the native Aramaic was the usual speech of virtually all of the Jews residing there. Greek, however, was the customary language of the millions of Jews scattered over the empire, and at the great religious festivals at Jerusalem thousands of these Greek-speaking Jews from abroad thronged the narrow streets. As a result of these contacts many Greek words became incorporated in the Aramaic, and not

[3] Geography, XVI:2.

a few even in the Hebrew, while the tendency to give Greek forms to Hebrew names was marked. The name of Jesus is itself a Greek rendering of the Hebrew Joshua. There was thus in the time of Jesus a strong Hellenic influence, which seems not to have materially affected the religion of the Jews but which must have made some impress upon their thought, their outlook, and the field of their knowledge.

Palestine also shared in the effects of the commerce which developed rapidly throughout the Roman world with the establishment of the empire by Augustus. It could not have been otherwise. The greater part of the country was upon the main highways of commerce. It looked out upon the Mediterranean, now flecked at all times with the sails of seagoing traffic. Its northern part, Galilee, lay athwart the ancient road, probably the oldest road in the world, connecting Egypt with the civilizations of Mesopotamia from time immemorial. This road led up to the seacoast from Egypt, turning inland to cross the plain of Esdraelon, passing between Nazareth and Mount Tabor on through Galilee by way of Capernaum, to cross the Jordan between the two lakes, and onward northeastward to Damascus and the valley of the Euphrates. This great highroad, which had been traversed by armies and caravans for three thousand years, was now busy with the endless traffic of a prosperous peace, which must have been of material advantage to Palestine and especially to Galilee. Another road started to Elath, at the tip of the eastern arm of the Red Sea, passed up the east side of the Jordan through Perea and on to Damascus where it connected with the other highway into Mesopotamia. Two main highways traversed Galilee from east to west, from the sea at Ptolemais, or Acre, one leading across southern Galilee by way of Nazareth to cross the Jordan south of Lake Galilee, the other farther north to join the roads to Damascus. Roads from Damascus also crossed Galilee by way of Caesarea Philippi to Tyre and Sidon. Over one or the other of these passed most of the traffic between the great Mesopotamian region and Rome. Galilee, and to a less extent the country of Palestine east of the Jordan, was thus something in the nature of a focal point for a large part of the commerce of

the Roman Empire. "The statements frequently made in regard to the seclusion of Palestine by natural barriers cannot, therefore, be substantiated. Only the southern part of the country [Judea] has this character of seclusion."[4] No through highway traversed Judea. Of its main outlets one ran northward from Jerusalem through Samaria into Galilee connecting with the through lines near Nazareth, another connected Jerusalem with the sea at Joppa, and a third led down by way of Jericho to cross the Jordan and into the north and south highway mentioned above. Judea, however, profited by the conditions of the time. Jerusalem was the capital of the nation, the sacred center of its religion, and here was concentrated most of its wealth. To Jerusalem came not only the tithes of the Jewish people throughout Palestine, but the devoted contributions of the Jews everywhere, now largely increased by the general prosperity; and this accumulation of wealth made abundant trade within Judea. All of these influences made this a rich and colorful period in the life of Palestine.

[4]Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. IX, p. 481.

Chapter IV

THE HOMELAND OF JESUS

The land of Jesus was a busy country, and perhaps no part of it was so busy as that which was his home and in which he spent his life, Galilee. It is a prevalent notion, one encouraged by many writers of the past, that Galilee was largely a rural region. It was, in fact, largely urban. Galilee was densely populated, thickly studded with cities and villages. Josephus says there were 204 of them within the small area of the province, not over 2,000 square miles, and he says in another place that none of these had less than 15,000 inhabitants. If that were the average it would mean that there were 3,000,000 people in these cities and towns. This is considered an exaggeration and very likely it is, but the statement of the number of cities and towns was made in writing in a letter to Jonathan, head of a delegation sent from Jerusalem into Galilee by the Sanhedrin, to whom he said, "You know there are 204 cities and villages in Galilee";[1] and Jonathan was one whose connections would give him accurate knowledge of such a matter. It is probable therefore that Josephus here stated the exact number of towns, and it is certain that some of them had more than 15,000 inhabitants; a few of them, indeed, were rather large cities. There was then on the average, if Josephus was correct, a city or village for every 10 square miles of Galilee. Obviously they could have been, as a rule, but a few miles apart, and obviously also, whatever their size, the total population must have been great for the small area of Galilee.

Yet agriculture in Galilee was a dominating industry. The soil, says Josephus, "is universally rich and fruitful, and planted with trees of all sorts, so that by its fruitfulness it invites even the slothful to take pains in its cultivation. Accordingly it is all cultivated and no part of it lies idle. Moreover, the cities lie

[1]Life, Sec. XLV, p. 36.

thick and the very many villages are everywhere so populous from the richness of the soil that the very least of them contains more than 15,000 inhabitants.'"[2] It is to be inferred from this that the great majority of those who cultivated the fields, the vineyards and the orchards lived within the towns and villages. This inference is strengthened by the statement of Josephus that the inhabitants of the "small city" of Gischala "were mostly husbandmen and ever applied themselves to cultivating the fruits of the earth.'"[3] This seems, indeed, to have been the general practice of the time. "In whatever point of view you consider the Roman world," says Guizot, "you meet with this almost exclusive preponderance of cities and an absence of country populations and dwellings.'"[4] The rural population with which the modern world is familiar hardly existed in the ages when individual security was the first consideration. The references to farm buildings in the Bible seem to apply to the incidental structures of care, harvesting and storage, such as threshing floors, barns and towers, rather than to permanent dwellings. That a large proportion of the population, perhaps a majority, was interested in or personally engaged in agriculture in its many forms may be assumed from the great importance of agriculture in the life of the province, but the farm owners and workers were mostly dwellers in towns or villages, which in no case could have been far from the fields which they cultivated. The Gospels present clear evidence of the great number of the cities and villages, their closeness together and the teeming population of the country. In short, such were the intimate relations of the people of this closely knit province that to a very large extent the farmers were town dwellers and the town dwellers were farmers. There was, therefore, no such distinction between country people and town people as we are accustomed to make. A realization of this is essential to an understanding of the circumstances and the surroundings of the life of Jesus.

[2]Wars, Book III, Chap. 3, Sec. 2.
[3]Ibid., Book IV, Chap. 2, Sec. 1.
[4]History of Civilization, Vol. I, Sec. 2.

But it is well also to realize that Galilee was in his day a land of beauty. One who visits Galilee now can get but a faint conception of what it was then. Its physical geography, to be sure, is unaltered, but its stately cities and most of its towns have vanished. No longer is it a land of verdant orchards and fields springing from a fruitful soil intensively cultivated; no longer is it a land of dense population; no longer is it busy with trade and industry; no longer does the commerce of the world pass along its highways. But then it was lovely in every physical aspect, singularly varied in the views it presented, with the products of the temperate and the semitropical zones in close proximity, fields of wheat within but a few miles of the fronds of waving palms, and the gray green of olive orchards. Few places on earth afforded within so small an area such a wide diversity of climate, such variety in the productions of nature.

The peculiar physical geography of the country, and the untiring industry of man at that time account for this. From its western edge one looked out upon the Mediterranean far below. Turning eastward one saw hills rising to 2,700 feet above sea level, and still higher in the north, where snow-capped Mount Hermon stood out visible from everywhere like a venerable guardian of the lands. Going eastward one descended after 25 or 30 miles to the Jordan and the Sea of Galilee, 680 feet below sea level, temperate in the higher levels, tropical in the low. Snow sometimes fell in the winter—Josephus mentions journeying there in a snowstorm—and there were aboundant rains during the winter, particularly in the autumn and early spring, the "former" and "latter" rains of the Scriptures, but the summers were rainless and hot. "For, lo, the winter is past; the rain is over and gone," cried the singer of the Song of Solomon. But there were, of course, variations in the richness and productiveness of the soil and its capacity to retain moisture. Irrigation was practiced wherever a flow of water was available, and the dews were very heavy, even in summer. Also the hills by ingenious terracing was made productive to their tops, as Josephus implies. It is quite likely that the neglected soil has worn thin

from erosion during the centuries since, and it is barely possible that the climate has changed somewhat, but it is probable that the same industry and skill applied to the land in Galilee would restore much of its ancient beauty.

Galilee had a wide variety of products but wheat and olives seem to have been chief among them and it was noted for the excellence and quantity of both. Bordering upon the narrow strip of coast land that constituted Phoenicia it supplied much of the food required by that rich and enterprising people whose land was quite insufficient for the supply of their needs in this respect. The country of Tyre and Sidon, it is stated in Acts, "was nourished"[5] by the country of Herod Agrippa, which must have referred primarily to Galilee.

Nevertheless, the structures of urban life were a conspicuous feature of every landscape. From any height—and there were many heights, for Galilee, as well as all Palestine, was, and is, predominantly a land of hills—cities and villages intruded upon the view. Nor were these entirely the drab and squalid clusters of huts that are characteristic of Syrian towns today. Doubtless the village architecture of that region has changed but little in twenty centuries, but then there were many cities with strong and lofty walls, containing handsome synagogues and public buildings, and not a few of them in which splendid Greek structures lifted high their Corinthian or Doric columns. In Sepphoris, for example, which Josephus called the "ornament of all Galilee," and which stood in a strong position but a few miles from Nazareth, were the palace and other fine buildings erected there by Herod Antipas when Jesus was a youth, which could hardly have been the only structures of such character, for Sepphoris was not a new city; although its origin is unknown it probably came into existence and became important before Galilee had been restored to the Jews and when Hellenic culture entirely dominated that region.

A few miles north of Sepphoris is supposed to have stood the city of Asochi, which Josephus for a time made his headquarters

[5]Acts 12:20.

while he was military governor of Galilee and which a century earlier was overcome by Ptolemy Latharus, 10,000 of its inhabitants being taken prisoners and doubtless enslaved. Just above Asochi was the city of Jatapata where Vespasian besieged the Galileans crowded within its walls, where perhaps the most desperate resistance to the Romans in the final war of the Jews occurred, that at Jerusalem excepted, and where Josephus himself ended his military career. Still farther west, on the border of Galilee, was Zabulon, which Josephus describes as a "strong city," of "admirable beauty" with its houses "built on the model of those of Tyre and Sidon and Barytus,"[6] the exact meaning of which nobody knows, but it suggests lofty structures of stone—recalling a statement of Strabo's that the houses of Tyre were many stories in height. In the north of Galilee was Gischala, famous for its olive oil. And down in the southeast of Galilee, although it was one of the independent cities of the Decapolis, the only one of the group west of the Jordan, was the splendid city of Scythopolis, the ancient Bethshean, one of the oldest cities in all Palestine.

But it was about Lake Galilee, or Gennesaret, that the cities were most closely connected and where the urban life of Galilee was most active, varied and picturesque. This little lake, scene of many incidents in the life of Jesus, is only about thirteen miles long by seven or eight miles broad, but clustered around it like pearls around a diamond were some nine or ten cities. On the western side they must have been so close together as almost to make a single city from one end of the lake to the other.

At the lower end of the lake, near the point where the Jordan emerges to continue its descent to the Dead Sea, was Tarichae, apparently next to Sepphoris and Tiberias the largest city in Galilee. Its size is indicated by the fact that in 51 B.C. it was taken by Cassius, the Roman commander—he of the "lean and hungry look" who later was concerned in the assassination of Julius Caesar—and 30,000 of its inhabitants were carried into slavery. It was the chief center of the fishing industry on the

[6]Wars, Book II, Chap. 18, Sec. 9.

lake, and this was a very large and important industry in which most of the lake cities shared. But at Tarichae it seems that fish were cured and shipped to all parts of Palestine and to outer points in Western Asia. Indeed, the fishing industry, and the needs and pleasures of the population along its shores, made the whole lake a lively scene. "When we add to the fishermen the crowd of shipbuilders, the many boats of traffic, pleasure and passage, we see that the whole basin must have been a focus of life and energy; the surface of the lake constantly dotted with the white sails of vessels flying before the mountain gusts, as the beach sparkled with the houses and palaces, the synagogues and temples of Jewish or Roman inhabitants."[7]

Above Tarichae was the town of Bethmaus, or Emmaus, the ancient Hammath, noted as a health resort because of its hot medicinal spring. The baths of this place "were famed across the whole ancient world."[8] And a short walk north of this place stood the city of Tiberias which in the time of Jesus' ministry was the political and social capital of the province, although it was founded by Herod Antipas only a few years earlier, and for some time was avoided by the Jews because its site had been a burial place and was therefore regarded as unclean. However, Herod built it and peopled it, and it soon rivaled Sepphoris, which he had abandoned, in size and excelled it in the splendor and number of the public buildings he constructed. A little above Tiberias was Magdala, a city of some importance, presumedly the home of Mary Magdalene, and just west of it was the neighboring town of Arbela. A mile or so north of Magdala was Capernaum, a city, not a village, of which more will be said later, and probably near by was Chorazin, for both in the Gospels and in the Talmud the two places are mentioned in conjunction. Capernaum was close to the point where the Jordan coming down from the north enters Lake Galilee, and just across the Jordan, and also by the lake, seems to have been Bethsaida, an opulent city, Josephus says. Coming down the eastern side of the lake

[7] Stanley, Sinai and Palestine, p. 367.
[8] Smith, Historical Geography of the Holy Land, p. 451.

the traveler of the time of Jesus found Gergesa, Gamala and Hippos, with Gadara overlooking the lake from its height southeast of Tarichae. All of these were Greek cities, adorned with the temples and other public buildings characteristic of Greek municipalities in that period.

"This catalogue of the towns of Lake Galilee," says Sir George Adam Smith, "if it fail to fix for us the sites of many of them cannot but force our imagination to realize the almost unbroken line of buildings by which the lake was surrounded. Of this her coasts still bear the mark. As the Dead Sea is girdled by an almost constant hedge of driftwood so the Sea of Galilee is girdled by a scarcely less continuous belt of ruins—the drift of her ancient towns. In the time of our Lord she must have mirrored within the outline of her guardian hills little else than city walls, houses, synagogues, wharves and factories. Greek architecture hung its magnificence over her simple life; Herod's castle, temple and theaters in Tiberias; the bath houses at Hammath; a hippodrome at Tarichae; and farther back from the shore the high-stacked houses of Hippos; the amphitheater at Gadara, looking up the lake, with the acropolis above it, and the paved street with its triumphal archway; the great Greek villas on the heights about Gadara, with a Roman camp or two, high enough up the slopes to catch the western breeze, and daily sending its troops to relieve guard in the cities."[9]

Obviously the numerous cities, towns and villages, the dense population of this province, made necessary an extensive business and industrial system. These people did not subsist on the scenery. Nor did "the Law and the Prophets" provide them with sustenance. They required not only food and clothing but the supply of the innumerable needs that accompany a high degree of civilization anywhere. Agriculture, to be sure, was the basis of their living, as it is, directly or indirectly, of all peoples. But even agriculture demands the processes of industry, exchange and transportation. Wheat must be ground, the oil must be extracted from the olives, the grapes must be pressed and their

[9]Smith, Historical Geography of the Holy Land, pp. 460, 461.

juices stored for fermentation, flax and wool must be spun into thread and woven into cloth. And all these and many other products, beyond individual requirements, must be sold and somehow delivered to the buyer. Some of them also must be prepared for shipment abroad, for Galilee had its exports, and no doubt its imports, for it could not have created everything it used. "Of 240 articles of commerce mentioned in the Talmud and Midrash, 130, or more than half, came from abroad."[10]

Yet aside from agriculture Galilee had a highly diversified industry. The fish industry has been already referred to. The fishermen whom Jesus called to be his disciples were evidently not hired workmen but independent fishers, with their own boats, engaged in what, judging from the extent of the industry, must have been a fairly remunerative business. Related to this was boat- and shipbuilding, which seems to have been centered at Tarichae. And that this was not an insignificant industry is indicated by the great number of boats and small ships used on the lakes. Josephus at one time formed a fleet of 240 ships to aid in an attack on Tiberias.[11] "Arbela," says Delitzsch, "took its name from its rope walks, and Kefar-Chananyi and Sichin from their potteries. Some actually took the name of such trades as Magdala the Dyer."[12] Arbela, a town on the great highway, near Magdala, was also noted for its cloth,[13] as were Sepphoris and Scythopolis. The principal production of the potteries at Kefar-Chananyi and Sichin seems to have been large jars for storing oil. Josephus says that Antigonus, brother of Aristobulus, one of the later Maccabean rulers of Judea, "had got a very fine suit of armor made in Galilee, with martial ornaments,"[14] from which it may be inferred that metalworking was an industry of the province.

Indeed, there were artisans of many trades at work in Galilee. "We find, almost contemporary with Jesus, mention of no less

[10]Klausner, Jesus of Nazareth, p. 186.
[11]Wars, Book II, Chap. 3, Sec. 3
[12]Jewish Artisan Life in Time of Christ, p. 32.
[13]Merrill, Galilee in the Time of Christ, p. 40.
[14]Wars, Book II, Chap. 21, Sec. 8.

than forty kinds of craftsmen in the Jewish literature; Sailors, shoemakers, builders, masons, carpenters, millers, bakers, butchers, slaughterers, dairymen, cheesemakers, physicians and blood-letters, barbers, hairdressers, laundrymen, jewelers, smiths, dyers, embroiderers, workers in gold brocade, carpet makers, malting makers, well-diggers, fishermen, bee-keepers, potters and plate makers (who were also pottery dealers), pitcher makers, coopers, pitch refiners and glaze makers, makers of glass and glassware, armorers, copyists, painters and engravers."[15] This catalogue, to which tentmakers and others might be added, refers to Palestine in general, but it indicates the great diversity of industries which the civilization of the time required, and representatives of most of these crafts must have been found in Galilee.

But trade in domestic and foreign products must have been in considerable volume for such a population. Galilee being on the great trade routes, and having, unlike Judea, a considerable gentile population, most of it no doubt engaged in trading, it is certain that foreign products and wares were distributed to no small extent. But the Jews themselves had by this time developed those extraordinary instincts for trade which have distinguished them for many centuries, and participated actively in the trade of their country, as well as of other lands throughout the empire where so many of them resided. But, as has been here indicated, domestic products themselves furnished material for abundant trade. Quoting Klausner again, a good authority in these matters, himself an eminent Jew, and long a resident of Jerusalem: "Alike in Jerusalem and every considerable Judean and Galilean town [Tiberias, Sepphoris, etc.] the merchants and craftsmen had their markets and booths; the booths of the cobblers, of the dyers, of the flax-dealers, of the spice-merchants, of the cotton dealers and of the clothiers; the markets of the bakers, of the weavers, of the metalworkers, of the glass makers, of the carpenters, of the wool merchants, of the cattle breeders—the cattle market, and so on."[16] Mention of market places is not infrequent in the Gospels, and every traveler in the Orient is

[15]Klausner, Jesus of Nazareth, p. 177.
[16]Klausner, Jesus of Nazareth, p. 186.

familiar with the open-front shops, or booths, which line the narrow streets in oriental towns, small but numerous. "I saw Sepphoris in its time of prosperity and it contained 180,000 booths of sellers of spices,"[17] wrote Rabbi Jose, in the second century, which indicates the size of that city as well as the magnitude of the spice trade in that day and for centuries later.

From all of this one may appreciate, and perhaps visualize, the beauty and the richness of Galilee, its mountains and plains and waters, its many cities, towns and villages, its dense population, its prolific industry, and its verdant fields and orchards, a fitting setting for the life and work of Jesus.

[17]Baba Bathra, 75b.

Chapter V

JEWISH GOVERNMENT

Life in Palestine, in the time of Jesus, was somewhat better ordered than in the greater part of the Roman Empire. Socially it had a number of advantages. While there was wealth in plenty its excesses were not so great, or at any rate not so flagrant, as elsewhere. Nor does it seem that corruption was as widespread or as vicious.

The reign of Herod the Great, to be sure, was distinguished by its extravagances and its cruelties, and was by no means free from venality and licentiousness. The embassy of the Jews which went to Rome to appeal to Augustus against Archelaus, the son of Herod, declared that "besides the annual impositions which he [Herod] laid upon every one of them, they had to make liberal presents to him and his domestics and friends, and to such of his slaves as were vouchsafed the favor of being his taxgatherers, because there was no way of obtaining freedom from unjust violence without giving either gold or silver for it"; and they said further that "they would say nothing of the deflowering of their virgins or the debauching of their wives, and that carried out in an inhuman manner, because it was almost equal pleasure to the sufferers to have such things concealed as not to have suffered them."[1] But Herod now was dead, his kingdom divided, and other men controlled under other conditions.

Herod Antipas, who ruled Galilee during the life of Jesus, seems to have been a pale image of his father, equaling him in neither his vices nor his virtues. He had something of his father's craftiness—Jesus referred to him as "that fox"—but little of his boldness and audacity. Herod the elder was energetic, forceful; Herod Antipas was indolent and weak. The father was hated by the Jews, the son was despised. That there was more or less corruption under such a ruler may be assumed.

[1]Josephus, Antiq. XVII, Chap. 11, Sec. 2.

But there are no instances recorded of extreme cruelty or conspicuous vice such as were common to the official life of the time throughout the empire. His execution of John the Baptist apparently stands alone, and this seems to have been the result rather of a weak submission to a woman's hatred, or, as Josephus says, of a fear that John's influence would cause a rebellion of the people, than of innate cruelty on the part of the tetrarch.

In short, no such heinous charges were preferred against the son as against the father, and the pages of the Gospels, as well as of Josephus, indicate that throughout the long rule of Antipas the life of the province was but little disturbed by his conduct or his regulations. In the narratives of the Gospels the influence of the provincial government upon the activities or the thought of the people seems to be negligible. There are no signs of any undue restraints upon their movements or their acts. They appear to have been singularly free and independent, and this could hardly have been so if the control of Antipas had been tyrannical. Josephus, who was born before the death of Antipas, who must have been personally acquainted with the circumstances of his reign, and who in his histories is careful to record everything of importance, and much that is not, affecting the Jews, had but little to say of Antipas or his government, which would indicate that he found few events that he thought worthy of his record. Unlike the period which immediately preceded, or that which immediately followed, Galilee was free from insurrection, nor apparently were any formal complaints made to Rome as to the conduct of the provincial government. The Jews strongly condemned some of the acts of Antipas in violation of the Mosaic laws, such as the marriage to Herodias, and the placing of figures of animals on his palace at Tiberias, and they were incensed by his execution of John, but their attitude seems to have been one of disapproving contempt rather than fierce hatred. On the whole, his rule of over 40 years was extraordinarily free from serious disturbance, he bothering the people very little and they ignoring him as far as they could. It was, for Galilee, a long period of calm between storms, during which the province flourished and the seeds of prodigious events was nourished.

If little can be said of political events under the rule of Herod Antipas, less can be said of political or any other events under the rule of his brother, Herod Philip, who governed the region east of Lake Galilee and the Upper Jordan. Philip appears to have been the one member of the Herodian family who inspired and merited public esteem. Nothing is said of him that is not to his credit. Like his father and his brother, he had a passion for building, and he made beautiful cities of Bethsaida, which he called Julias, and Caesarea Philippi; but he was not unduly extravagant, he lived without ostentation and without scandal, he loved peace and administered justice fairly. He was a friend of the Romans and apparently did not offend the Jews, although he issued coins bearing the image of Caesar. His rule of 38 years, almost as long as that of Antipas, was happily uneventful, and he died honored by Rome as well as by his people, while Antipas died in exile and disgrace, a victim of the displeasure of Rome.

Judea, together with Samaria and Idumea, after ten troubled years (4 B.C. to A.D. 6) under the rule of Archelaus, the worst of the sons of Herod, was taken under direct control by Rome, Archelaus being deposed and banished; and it was governed thereafter by a succession of Roman officials called "procurators," who were military dictators, harsh or lenient as their disposition inclined them, but who followed the general usage of Rome in leaving ordinary civil administration to the Jewish authorities of the country and the communities, subject to certain limitations. Thus the Sanhedrin at Jerusalem exercised general jurisdiction over the law within the territory controlled by the procurator, and the "elders" of the towns performed their duties unmolested as a rule by the alien powers. "The civil law was wholly in the hands of the Sanhedrin and native or local magistrates; Jewish courts decided according to Jewish law."[2] At the same time the procurator and his agents could and often did interfere at pleasure with the native administration of the law.

This direct control, with its resident Roman governor, one unacquainted with Jewish customs and not in sympathy with its traditions and prejudices; its minor Roman officials, its petty

[2]Schurer, Jewish People in Time of Christ, Div. I, Vol. II, p. 74.

court and its soldiery, made the power of Rome more conspicuously visible in Judea, its exactions greater, the ignominy of its presence and sway more irritating, than elsewhere in Palestine at this period. There were, to be sure, detachments of the Roman legions stationed in the other provinces, but these were for emergency purposes and apparently they did not interfere at all at this time in provincial government; which, moreover, was in the hands of rulers who were not Romans and who were nominally of the Jewish faith. It is true that the spirit of rebellion was stirring in these provinces as well as in Judea, and particularly so in Galilee, but this was, in them, due more to popular ideas of a nearing exaltation of the race in fulfillment of divine prophecies than to the direct pressure of Roman subjection, irksome as that was to a proud people.

But Jewish life in Palestine was singular in that, unlike other people of the empire, it was so largely controlled by religious considerations and religious regulations. In virtually all of the lands of the empire that which we call "the church" and the state were more or less closely associated, but, generally speaking, the office of religion in that relation was to support the state. Skeptical, and often cynical, Rome regarded religion as a useful aid in the control of its own people as well as its subject peoples. It therefore cared little what form religion took anywhere, and it made no effort, at this time, to implant its own religious cults in the countries it conquered; but everywhere the secular interests were dominant. And this subordination of religion to the secular concerns of the state was the common attitude of all countries.

Among the Jews, however, religion was the pre-eminent factor in government and in life. The church was not merely an arm of the state, it *was* the state. For centuries, ever since the return from the Babylonian Exile, in fact, Judea had been ruled by a priestly aristocracy with the chief priest as its chief ruler. That is to say, it had been up to the time of Herod, for even the Asmonean princes, the Maccabees and their descendants, became rulers by becoming high priests. Under Herod the high priests were his creatures, and after him the Romans made them subservient; but none the less the Jews looked upon the Chief Priest

as the actual head of their legal system, which had as its basis the Law, handed down, as they believed, by God to Moses. And this Law, essentially religious, and sacred, governed not only their religious principles and formalities but their social and civil life, and, so far as they could control it, their political life as well. Moreover, this Law contained a code of ethical and humanitarian regulations that lifted the Jews above any people of the time in the ethical and spiritual standards that to no small extent controlled their conduct. And this Law, this code, and the public opinion back of it exercised a restraint upon the conduct of native officials and upon society generally, even upon the wealthy and aristocratic society at Jerusalem, although that society was more inclined than any other to adopt the customs of the Roman world.

While the Chief Priest and Sanhedrin had at this time no civil authority over the territory governed by Herod Antipas or Philip,[3] the laws of the Jews were applied in the communities of these provinces, under the administration of the local elders, with as much respect for the Jewish officials of the Law at Jerusalem as if they were in real control. Therefore throughout all Palestine the influence of the sacred Law of the Jews was paramount in the life and conduct of the people, and whatever their failings may have been there was comparatively little of the gross immorality and corruption then so prevalent in the empire.

Moreover, the debasing and demoralizing influence of slavery was not felt in Palestine to the same extent as elsewhere. Slavery existed, it is true, but the slave population was not great or menacing, and the Jewish laws and Jewish sentiments made the lot of the slave more tolerable than under the Romans, the Greeks, or the neighboring Syrians.

There is nothing to indicate that the slaves in Palestine displaced free labor disastrously, as they did in many portions of the empire. And labor was otherwise fortunate in that land. To the Jew there was nothing degrading in work. On the contrary, labor was honored. It had not only divine sanction but the divine blessing. God himself was represented as one who labored, and who rested from his labors on the seventh day. "Six days shalt thou labor," was his command, and the sabbath was instituted

[3]Schurer, Jewish People in Time of Christ, Div. II, Vol. I, p. 185.

primarily as a rest for labor and a boon for labor. The Lord, they were told, shall "bless the work of their hands."[4] Throughout the sacred Scriptures were admonitions to industry. The dignity of labor was thereby established as a common principle of Jewish life. And the highest positions, other than those of the hereditary priesthood, were obtainable by workers. Most of the noted scribes, for example, were agricultural or industrial workers, and it is said to have been the custom of the rabbis to work at their trades one-third of the day and study the remainder.[5] "Love handicraft, shun power and make for thyself no friends of worldly might" was a maxim of Shammai, a leader of the Pharisees in the first century B.C. He himself was a builder, and his celebrated rival and opponent, Hillel, was a woodchopper. And one recalls that Paul, the tentmaker, "sat at the feet of Gamaliel."

But equally important was the fact that there were no fixed class distinctions, other than the hereditary priesthood, and, of course, the slaves. Between these two extremes was the great body of the people, constituting what may be termed the middle class, composed of professional men—lawyers, physicians, teachers—merchants and tradesmen, landlords, artisans, farmers, and workers of all descriptions. Among all of these the only social distinctions were those of wealth, learning, position and blood common to modern democratic countries. The priestly families, it is true, constituted a hereditary aristocracy large in numbers, potent in influence, which often manifested the pride and arrogance that are so frequently a disagreeable characteristic of hereditary aristocracy everywhere. Moreover, it was within the ranks of this priestly aristocracy, strangely enough in view of its religious functions, that the most worldly minded, most corrupt, most Grecian in sympathy and manners, and least patriotic, of the Jews were found. However, this class was concentrated largely in Jerusalem and vicinity. We hear little of it in the provinces, either in the Gospels or Josephus.

There were, however, and as a matter of course, great differences of conditions and of standing among the people who com-

[4]Deut. 28:12.
[5]Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. IV, p. 295.

posed that which we have called the middle class. There was wealth and there was poverty, more of poverty than of wealth. There were rich landlords, and there were landless peasants. The streets of the towns were infested with beggars, for in the Orient mendicancy has ever been a prolific evil, and Palestine was no exception, as the Gospels make plain. Yet there was charity, perhaps more general than elsewhere, for it was not only encouraged but commanded by the Law. "Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and thy needy in thy land."[6] And a portion of the tithes was set aside for such purposes.

On the other hand taxes were heavy and onerous, and practically no one escaped their burden. During the reign of Herod the Great they had been atrociously exacting throughout Palestine, and under the procurators they were no less extortionate in Judea, but in the provinces ruled by Herod Antipas and Philip they seem to have been less so, if we may judge from the relative quiet, and absence of complaints, during their administrations. For while definite information is lacking there is reason to believe that the tetrarchs levied and collected the direct taxes within their provinces for their own use and with considerable independence as to rates and forms.[7] "The Romans left to the governors and procurators the collection of the regular taxes, such as the land tax and poll tax, but leased the customs duties, the market tolls and similar special imposts."[8] In any case the poll taxes applied virtually to the whole people, men, women, and even slaves, under the Roman system, and only very young children and very old persons were exempt from their payment.[9] As it seems to have been of uniform amount for every individual it must have been individually small, but the fact that it was so nearly universal made it a universal irritant, particularly so when it was levied directly by Rome, as it was in Judea.

But more than all else the customs dues contributed to the resentment of the Jews. Import and export duties were levied on innumerable objects of common use, and the collecting of these duties was intrusted by Rome to contractors called "pub-

[6]Deut. 15:11.
[7]Schurer, Jewish People in Time of Christ, Div. I, Vol. II, pp. 65f.
[8]Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. XII, p. 69.
[9]Schurer, Jewish People, Div. I, Vol. II, p. 110.

licans," who paid a fixed annual sum for the privilege in a particular district. Whatever they obtained in excess of that sum was their profit, and as there was little restraint upon their exactions the privilege was pretty generally abused. These contractors, or lessees, necessarily had their subordinate taxgatherers, to whom as well as to their principal the name of publican was applied; and because of their supposed extortions, which in many instances may have been imaginary, they were heartily disliked, and they were socially proscribed.

But all of these taxes were in addition to the customary taxes which were required for maintenance of the temple worship and the support of the priesthood, the numerous priests and Levites and their families, who drew not only their subsistence but incomes that constituted wealth from the contributions, prescribed and voluntary, which came from the Jewish people. These included the temple tax of a half-shekel which had to be paid by every male Jew of twenty years or over, and which was used to defray the operating expenses of the temple; the tithes, a tenth part of "everything which may be used as food and is cultivated and grows out of the earth,"[10] certain payments from flocks and herds, and some other offerings, all of which were required from rich and poor. These and voluntary offerings of various kinds, and donations, were for the most part the personal emolument of the priests.[11]

On the whole, these taxes for the maintenance of the religious establishment were not light, and when on top of them were piled the civil administrative taxes above outlined it is clear that the Jew of the time of Jesus had to pay a considerable proportion of his earnings and possessions in the form of taxes of many sorts. Of their religious taxes apparently they never complained, even though they did support a priestly and dominating aristocracy in luxury. To these they were long accustomed and their religious devotion would not permit any murmuring. But the civil taxes were another matter, and when they were mercilessly exacted by an alien and pagan power they were often exasperating beyond endurance to a proud and spirited people.

[10]Masseroth, I, 1.
[11]Schurer, Jewish People, Div. II, Vol. I, pp. 230f.

CHAPTER VI

The Religious Background—Beginnings

It has been said that Jewish life and Jewish government, general and local, were based upon their peculiar religion. All of their institutions existed to put into effect the rules and regulations of their religion, to sustain and to promote its teachings and ceremonials. Strictly speaking, there were no secular interests. The daily vocations of the people were permeated with the prescriptions of the Law, which in itself was not merely an instrument of religion but *was* religion, in action. They lived and labored, in theory at least, and largely so in fact, to serve the Law. Their literature, their education, related exclusively to religion, and because their government was fundamentally an agency of religion even their politics had ever a religious aspect. It was this concentration upon religion that distinguished the Jews among the people of the time, made them a unique, inexplicable, and difficult race. Therefore if one is to understand their daily life one must have some understanding not only of the nature of their religion, but of how they acquired it.

The conception of God which Israel drew from the experience of the Exodus was that he was a god of might, a warrior god, a "Lord of hosts," a deliverer. Their people had been slaves in Egypt for centuries. They had been rescued from this slavery and brought into possession of a new land under circumstances that made an indelible impression upon the consciousness of the race; and this had been done by the power of a god hitherto unknown to them,[1] who had chosen them as his people.

The gods of other Semitic tribes, and for that matter of all people, were in a sense creations of their own. All of them had chosen their gods, so to speak, and these gods were not, and could not be, independent of the people who gave them worship, and could not exist apart from them. But this god, Yahweh (Jeho-

[1]Exodus 6:3.

vah), had deliberately chosen the Israelites to serve him. That being the case, he had obviously existed before them, was not dependent upon them, and could at will abandon them if they failed in his service. Moreover, the gods of other peoples were gradually developed productions. No one knew anything of their beginnings. But the god of the Israelites had, for them, a definite beginning, definite both in time and place. He had appeared to Moses in the burning bush and announced his name, his purpose and his adoption of the tribe. And subsequently, after their miraculous liberation, the people themselves had heard his voice in the thunders of Sinai, as he laid down his commandments.

His first and foremost command was that they should have no other gods. Other people had many gods, and they desired many. But this god, who had chosen the Israelites as his own people, had delivered them from the oppression of Egypt, and had given them homes in a free land, would permit no divided allegiance. "I, and I only, shalt thou serve," he told them. Another peculiar command he gave them. "Thou shalt make thee no molten gods," or, according to another version, "no graven image." No image, even of himself, was to be permitted. All idols were prohibited. Other tribes and races gave visible form in some way or other to their ideas of deity. They bowed down before images of stone or wood or metal. The god of Israel would have none of this. His people must worship him in spirit, as something too great, too awesome, to be embodied in any material shape.

These stipulations set the Israelites apart, at the very beginning of their existence as a nation, as a separate people, different from all others. The religion thus dramatically inaugurated was not then, nor for long afterward, a monotheism. The existence of other gods was recognized in the very terms of the divine command. But in the exclusive devotion to one god which it required, and in the elevation of that God above all material semblances, it implanted the seed that in time was to bear fruit in the splendid conception of one god over all mankind and thereby to make the Hebrew race the spiritual pioneers of humanity.

But this god, out of the midst of the fire of the thunderous mountain, had given promises as well as commands. He had condescended to make a covenant with them, a contract. Serve me and I will serve you, he said in effect. This again was something new, something different, in religion. The gods of other peoples, as has been said, were bound to them by unbreakable ties of kinship, and their relations involved no particular obligations on either side. But this free and independent god who had adopted Israel established a conditional, contractual relation. And the people of Israel were parties to this contract. They must keep their part by obedience to his commands if they were to expect him to keep his part in their protection and guidance. Thus was born the idea of a mutual obligation and responsibility which was the germ of the later ethical development of the religion of Israel. "Interpreting, as the prophets of a later time did, this covenant as of ethical and spiritual content, they differentiated the religion of Israel from the other religions of the world and made it the earliest beacon of humanity's high destiny."[2]

It was long, however, before this germ bore fruit. It was hard for a primitive people to maintain allegiance to an abstract deity who could not be given form and shape for worship, and who sternly forbade attractive practices of idolatry common to the people with whom the Israelites came into close contact. The Book of Judges is a succession of events growing out of the repetition of the fact that "the children of Israel forgot Yahweh their God," and the consequent circumstances which induced them to return to him. The history of the people through the days of the single monarchy of Saul, David, and Solomon, and the dual monarchies which followed is the same story of intense loyalty to their deity in time of trouble but repeated failures to maintain that loyalty. In fact, their transgressions became more and more frequent and pronounced under the dual monarchies of Israel and Judah than ever before. "This people hath a revolting and a rebellious heart,"[3] said the Lord through the prophet

[2]Barton, The Religion of Israel.
[3]Jeremiah 5:23.

Jeremiah, and their own histories are a frank exposition of those tendencies in these centuries of their development.

But it was just those rebellions and desertions that called into life and action a succession of the most remarkable religious leaders mankind has ever known, fearless men who were filled with the sense of a divine mission, profoundly convinced that God spoke directly to them, and through them, to the people. When Amos, the shepherd of Tekoah, the first of the line of Hebrew prophets whose words are recorded, began to speak to the Hebrews of the Northern Kingdom, he opened a new era in the development of the religion of the world. "Thus saith the Lord," was the confident announcement of Amos, as it was of Hosea, and Micah, and Isaiah, and Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. They were men of vision who saw beyond the material circumstances of life and discerned the spiritual, poets whose fervid imagination brought them into touch and communion with deity, and who with striking symbolism proclaimed the power and the unfailing justice of God, while at the same time they emphasized his essential goodness and unfaltering patience. But primarily, for their own times, they were inspired leaders sent to recall their people to their duty, to warn them of their certain fate if they continued in disobedience to the commands of their God, and to show them the way to his forgiveness and mercy.

The cries of Amos and Hosea had no effect upon the people of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, and soon afterward the Assyrians, in a series of invasions, brought that kingdom to an end, obliterating the "ten tribes" that had composed it. Although Josephus says that in his day countless numbers of their descendants existed in the lands where the captives had been settled, these people never again figured in Hebrew history or in the further development of the Hebrew race. In Judah, however, Micah, and in a larger way Isaiah, took up the missions of Amos and Hosea, and their teachings ultimately brought about the far-reaching reforms effected under the reign of Josiah. But that kingdom also was hastening to its end, and neither their influence nor that of Jeremiah, supported by Habakkuk and Zephaniah, could avert the doom which the unspeakable wickedness

of Manasseh brought down upon it. The destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C. terminated the history of the Hebrew people that had begun with the Exodus, and opened a new volume.

The end of the kingdom of Judah and the captivity of its leading inhabitants had no such catastrophic result as the destruction of the kingdom of Israel. On the contrary, it was the beginning of a new epoch in which were laid the foundations of a faith and a religious system which confirmed and perpetuated that separateness in which the original faith was established but which had never been sustained under the monarchies, giving them a solidarity they were never again to lose, and made the Jews a permanent and highly important factor in the spiritual progress of mankind. If the Judeans had lost their identity and their religion in the new surroundings of the Babylonian Exile, as apparently their kinsmen of Israel had done in Assyria, the Hebrew race would have disappeared as completely as the Hittites before them, or as the Assyrians of their own time were to do. But fortunately for them, and for mankind, the Judeans, some of them at least, were made of sterner stuff. Fortunately for them also they had the advantage of the teachings of the great prophets, Isaiah and Jeremiah; and two other great prophets, Ezekiel and the so-called Second Isaiah, were developed from the Exile itself.

Moreover, impressive events had given weight to the teachings of the earlier of the prophets they had never had before in the minds of the people. "What had been preserved and collected of the words of the prophets had acquired through the fulfillment of their predictions of doom an estimation and authority such as their contemporaries had never accorded to the spoken words."[4] Doubtless, in the Exile, they were studied as they had not been heretofore in the effort not only to find an explanation for their national disaster, but to find a way to avoid future disaster if they were permitted to re-establish themselves in the land of their fathers. They realized, first of all, from the teachings of the prophets, and their present situation, that their God

[4]Moore, Judaism, Vol. I, p. 65.

was more than a tribal or local deity, that his jurisdiction was not limited to the confines of Judea or Palestine, that he was still with them in Babylonia, and that the temple, however important, was not absolutely essential to their worship. Accordingly, there is reason to believe, they developed in their Exile those community gatherings for worship which were the forerunners of the later synagogues, as well as a more particular observance of the sabbath and other primitive regulations of their religion that were not dependent upon the temple. Thus they maintained the elements of their ancient religion under circumstances favorable to its extinction.

But more than all else, they seem to have given earnest consideration to a revision and expansion of the law of Moses. Presumedly they reflected that if their troubles were the result of the failure of their people to obey the laws of God, as their prophets had told them and were now telling them, the laws and their significance should be made clearer to the general understanding; and the religious machinery of their administration should be better and more formally organized than in the past if they were to avoid disaster in the future. At any rate, it seems clear that in the period following the destruction of the kingdom of Judah, the religion of the Hebrews was transformed from one of tradition and custom to one of specific Law, and the nation itself from a political entity with a monarchial government to a religious community with a priestly government; and that this transformation had its sources in far-off Babylonia.

Law in the statutory sense seems to have had little if any influence upon the religious life of the Hebrews previous to the Exile. The original commands of God, the decalogue, were graven upon stone and deposited within the sacred Ark of the Covenant. And doubtless besides the elements of the covenant of Sinai there were various ordinances and regulations of worship that were handed down from generation to generation. But if there was any written law, any comprehensive code, after the beginning of political Hebrew organizations in Palestine, there is little evidence of its existence or use in the records written before the Exile. One looks through the Books of Judges and

Samuel in vain for any reference to governing laws. And although David and Solomon speak of the commandments and statutes of the Lord they seem to refer to traditional and oral codes rather than to written laws, nor are these anywhere defined. It is not until we come to the reign of Josiah, after the northern kingdom of Israel had perished and that of Judah was nearing its end, that we hear of a real book of the Law.

This book was discovered in the year 621 B.C., by Hilkiah the high priest, in the temple, which was then being repaired, and it is evident from the narrative that it was not known that such a compilation of laws existed or had ever existed. The king was amazed when it was brought to him and read before him, and he immediately ordered that its commands be put into effect. This worked the first great revolution in the religion of the Hebrews. For following out the prescriptions of this law all the places of worship in the land, the ancient altars that had been sacred from the time of Joshua, were completely destroyed, and the temple of Jerusalem, the temple built by Solomon, made the sole recognized sanctuary of the nation. The temple itself was purified, and the instruments of idolatrous worship that were taken from it reveal more impressively than any description the gross apostasy of the Hebrews in this and previous ages, and the good reasons for the thunders of condemnation from the prophets.

The book found by Hilkiah[5] has been identified by biblical critics as substantially the Book of Deuteronomy, for the reforms carried out by Josiah were in accord with the Deuteronomic code. That it was a new code, or at least one that was hitherto unknown or unregarded, is indicated by the fact that its primary regulations had never been applied before. Moreover, it gave legal expression to many of the ethical principles expressed by the prophets of the eighth and seventh centuries. Indeed, in this book the laws of the Pentateuch reach the highest ethical standards. Whatever may have been its origin, and whatever written statutes may have previously existed, the discovery and publication of this book certainly gave to written law a governing status it had never had in the past.

[5] 2 Kings 22:3.

More than that, it inaugurated a momentous change in the religious system of the Hebrews. In early times sacrifices were not dependent upon priest or place. There were sanctuaries scattered over the land, some of them in higher repute than others, but altars could be set up and offerings made anywhere that circumstances prompted. Sacrifice was a personal rite,[6] the function of the priest being largely the guardianship of the sanctuary, and divination. Nor does it appear from Judges and Samuel that there was any exclusive class or family of priests. Samuel himself was not a Levite but an Ephraimite. There are indications in Judges that a Levite priest was considered a little better than an ordinary priest[7] but others could serve as priests. With the construction of the temple at Jerusalem there was necessarily a larger and more systematic organization for the temple service, but there is no evidence in Samuel or Kings of an exclusive priestly order under the monarchy.

The sweeping reform of Josiah, by obliterating the provincial sanctuaries and centralizing sacrificial worship at Jerusalem, deprived all the provincial priests of their livelihood and raised a question as to their disposition which had not been definitely answered when, soon after the death of Josiah, the kingdom of Judah was brought to an end, the temple destroyed, and the leading elements of the nation taken into captivity in Babylonia. It was, however, one of the problems considered by the reconstructive spirits in exile, and its solution influenced the character of the priestly system given initial form by these people under the leadership of the priest and prophet, Ezekiel.

Fifty years after the destruction of Jerusalem, Cyrus, the Persian conqueror, permitted the first of the Hebrew exiles to return, with Zerubbabel as their leader. About the year 520 B.C. rebuilding of the temple was commenced and in 515 B.C. it was dedicated. It was not, however, until the arrival of Ezra from Babylon in 458 B.C. that the establishment of the new order and new system was inaugurated. And Ezra came with another book of the Law, which after some years of preparation, including a re-

[6]Judges 13:19.
[7]Judges 17:13.

building of the walls of Jerusalem by Nehemiah, was given to the people of Judea for their government. "The account of the introduction of this law shows that the community in Jerusalem till then had possessed no copy of this book and had no definite knowledge of it."[8] As modern scholars have identified the book of Hilkiah with Deuteronomy so they have identified the book of Ezra with Leviticus, although from the time taken in the reading of it as described in Nehemiah it must have comprehended much more than the single Book of Leviticus. It is possible, some think, that it embraced substantially the entire Pentateuch, the "priestly code," as it is called, being added chiefly in Leviticus, but also woven into the older books. Indeed, there is perhaps no subject of biblical criticism that has caused so much controversy as this. But whatever may have been the nature, the sources, or the authorship of the book produced by Ezra, its effects are clearly discernible in the whole subsequent history of Judea and the Jewish people. The reading of this law was as dramatic an event as the reading of the book found by Hilkiah, almost two centuries before, and the results of its establishment were even more far reaching.

For the Book of Ezra set up a new system of government and a new system of religion, the first of which was maintained with more or less effectiveness through the vicissitudes of the centuries down to the termination of the political existence of the Jewish state with the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, and the second, after over 2300 years, still persists, in essence and principle, as the religion of the Jews of today, although the temple and the priesthood around which it was centered have long since perished. In the establishment of this law and these systems the ancient religion of Israel passed away, and Judaism, a new religion, though a development of the old one and retaining its primary principles, had its beginnings. Also with the establishment of this law Judea became a theocracy instead of a monarchy, ruled both in civil as well as in strictly religious affairs by its priests, headed by a high priest. It became in effect a religious congregation, existing primarily for the service and main-

[8]Moore, Judaism, Vol. I, p. 11.

tenance of its religion, a church state. The Jerusalem priests became a hereditary hierarchy, and the descendants of the provincial priests, dispossessed by the reforms of Josiah, became, under the name of Levites, a hereditary order of temple servers, inferior to the priests but like them supported by public contributions rigidly exacted in the form of tithes. Thus was solved the problem of the disposition of the provincial priests. The temple ceremonials were given more definite form than in the past, and an elaborate ritual was created for the various offerings, and for numerous individual and official observances.

Fundamentally, however, it made the Law, the written Law, the basis of Jewish life, civil as well as religious. It surrounded the covenant of Sinai with a vast and complicated system of prescriptions and rituals designed to safeguard it by making the observance of the whole Law, which incorporated the covenant, the first duty of the nation. Conversely the idea of the covenant, and the obligations of the covenant, were expanded to embrace the Law in its entirety. As the original covenant and its attendant commands were given to Moses on Mount Sinai, so now all the laws embodied in the Pentateuch—including in particular the Levitical code, its latest addition—were attributed to the same divine source, and obedience to every detail of this enormously extended system of laws was made obligatory.

But while this conception of religion as a covenant between God and the people of Israel was basic from their beginning as a people, and was so emphasized in the new order, yet the keynote of the new system was the idea of holiness. The original meaning of the Hebrew word *Kodesh,* translated "holiness," and its primary meaning at this time, was separation. "The Levitical legislation," says the Jewish Encyclopedia, "made holiness the central idea of the Mosaic Law," and it defines holiness as "the state of separation from, and elevation above, things common, profane or sensual, first in a physical and external, and later in a spiritual sense." The idea which controlled the development of this system, and the later development of Judaism, was clearly expressed in the command of God presented in Leviticus: "I am the LORD your God, which have separated you from other people.

Ye shall therefore put difference between clean beasts and unclean, and between unclean fowls and clean. . . . Ye shall be holy unto me; for I the LORD am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine."[9] They were, in short, to be a people consecrated to his service. They were not only to abstain from idolatry, but intermarriage with idolaters was sternly forbidden. The rite of circumcision, strict observance of the sabbath, distinctive marks on body and dress, meticulous rules defining the clean and unclean, and other requirements, in addition to unswerving loyalty to their peculiar and exclusive religion, were designed to effect this separation. And the proof of the intelligence of the design is the fact that it worked. "The separateness of the Jews . . . accomplished its end in the survival of Judaism, and therein history has vindicated it."[10]

[9]Leviticus 20:24-26.
[10]Moore, Judaism, 1-21.

Chapter VII

BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS—INSTITUTIONS

With the promulgation of the code of Laws and its acceptance by the people of Jerusalem and Judea, accompanied by a public oath to preserve and observe it, the curtain falls upon the biblical history of the Jews, and the long period of darkness heretofore referred to sets in. Thus it is to be noticed that the biblical record comes to a close with what was in effect a new religion. It was in many respects a finer religion than that which had preceded it. For now were embodied in the Law, particularly in Deuteronomy, not only the high conception of the nature of God expressed by the prophets but the principles of their ethical teachings. The priests, to be sure, had created a rigorous code of ritualistic regulations, but the work of the prophets had not been in vain.

Yet the canonical books of the Old Testament throw no light on the subsequent application of that religion, nor upon its development during the 400 or more years that were to pass before the beginning of the Christian Era, save such shadowy inferences as we may glean from certain writings that critical examination reveals were written at some time during this later period, the Book of Daniel for example. But that there were highly important developments effecting no small change in the religion established by Ezra and Nehemiah, in the passage of these four centuries, is made clear by other writings within this period, and by the religious conditions in the time of Jesus revealed by the books of the New Testament, the works of Josephus, and the tractates of the Talmud.

Some of this change was the natural outgrowth of the Law itself. The tendency of all law is to self-expansion. A statute enacted today will usually require amendment tomorrow, and later more and more amendments as experience and changing circumstances demand. If it is not amended and expanded by legislation it is by interpretation, as its application to specific instances calls for judicial rulings; and such interpretations by recognized au-

thority often themselves acquire the force of law. We cannot be sure that the laws embodied in the Pentateuch were ever altered after the time of Ezra, but we may be certain that as the years went by these laws came to be regarded as unalterable and unrepealable, ascribed as they were to God himself. Interpretation, however, was not only permissible but essential. What was the meaning of a particular command, and how was it to be applied to varying cases? Such questions naturally and inevitably arose and called for answers. Moreover, it is to be remembered that this great code included the civil and criminal laws necessary to any organized government. Offenders had to be tried, property rights to be adjusted. Decisions had to be rendered, rulings made. Whenever a people reach the stage of civilization where their laws are written, and their justice and the regulation of human conduct are based upon their application, experts in the law are a necessary development. The written law of the Jews, the Torah, was a highly complicated and technical code, which perhaps went further in the control of individual and social conduct than any code ever devised. At first, it may be assumed from the priestly nature of the government established by Ezra and Nehemiah, the priests were the official interpreters of the Law. But the priests no doubt found their ecclesiastical functions sufficient, and it is likely that many of them were not fitted for, nor inclined to, the study of the Law which its direct application required. And gradually—we do not know when or by what degrees—this task fell into the hands of professional lawyers called the scribes.

The first light is thrown on the development through the years of obscurity by the writings of Jesus, son of Sirach, the Ecclesiasticus of the Apocryphal books, written about 200 B.C. In the Scriptures various individuals, Ezra in particular, are referred to as scribes. "In Sirach, however, they are an institution for which a history must be assumed to bring it on the stage. The biblical scholars and teachers of the Law, written and unwritten, not only have attained great proficiency in their calling but as a class have taken a place alongside the priests, in whose hands in older times was the Law and its interpretation. . . . It is a natural supposition that the lay scribes did not at first concern

themselves so much about points of ritual with which the priests had to do as about other spheres of the Law. Later, however, they extended their research to this field, and at last, realizing on popular support, undertook to regulate or reform priestly practice in conformity with their own exegesis of it."[1] By the time of Jesus of Nazareth these professional lawyers had actually supplanted the priests as the official authorities in matters of law and as the teachers of the people in the forms and the application of the Law. This their interpretation had greatly expanded, until now there was a body of oral or unwritten law more extensive than the written Law of the Pentateuch, and much of this had become no less sacred and authoritative than the Torah itself.

A second outgrowth of the application of the written Law was the development of the synagogue. The origin of this unique institution is lost in the period of obscurity here under consideration. That it did not exist previous to the Exile seems certain. That it had its beginnings in the circumstances of the Exile may be reasonably assumed. In order to preserve their religion amid the pagan surroundings and influences of Babylonia, meetings of the faithful must have been frequently held for prayer, study and discussion, and doubtless the sabbath came to be regularly utilized for this purpose. But in Judea also the suppression of the local altars and regional sanctuaries by Josiah created a need for some sort of community substitute for the ancient centers of religion. The people away from Jerusalem could hardly go up to the temple for worship more than two or three times a year and such long intervals were not favorable to the maintenance of religious devotion. Moreover, the new religion of the Law, which contemplated and commanded the strict observance of a comprehensive and complicated code of laws by the whole people, made it essential that the whole people be instructed in the Law and trained in its practice, and this again required local community agencies of education.

Doubtless all of these circumstances entered into the origin as well as the development of the synagogue. It may be supposed that it came into being gradually in natural response to the needs

[1]Moore, Judaism, Vol. I, pp. 42, 43.

of the time, the conditions, the race and the peculiar religion which it fostered. What is definitely known is that when the light begins to glow directly upon the dark centuries that succeeded the time of Nehemiah, the synagogue, like that other associated institution, the scribes, was well established. And as the scribes eventually took over from the priesthood the interpretation of and instruction in the Law, so the synagogues rather than the temple came in time to embody the spirit of the religion of the Law.

The temple, to be sure, was the official center of the religion of the Jews. Here alone were the rich and picturesque ceremonials of official worship. Here alone was the place of sacrifice. Here alone were the countless offerings in atonement for individual and public sins. Here alone the army of priests concentrated their services. The temple was, in a way, the pinnacle, the apotheosis, of the religious structure. Yet the Law, save as it prescribed the ritual of the temple service, the qualifications of the priests, and the public support of the temple and its officiates, was something apart from, and not dependent upon, the temple worship. The Law was principally concerned with the conduct, the faith, the life of the people. No doubt this was far from the design of the priestly authors of the code, but time and circumstances, the scribes and the synagogues, made the Law a centrifugal rather than a centripetal force, as the priests must have intended it to be. It was in the synagogues instead of the temple that the cult of the Law had its popular development under the tutelage of the lay scribes. By the time of Jesus there was a synagogue in every town in Palestine, more than one in the larger places. Here the Jew of every class and condition, for it was a democratic institution, found a close and frequent outlet for his religious devotion. Here, indeed, was the heart and life of Judaism, and here the religion of the Law was nourished as nowhere else.

But in the long run the more important effect of the religion of the Law and of the development of the synagogue was their part in sustaining the faith and racial integrity of the Jews scattered in vast numbers over the world. What is termed "the

Dispersion" began with the compulsory deportation of the Jews after the downfall of the kingdoms. But it inaugurated a process of voluntary emigration which gradually established Jewish colonies in every land. These colonies greatly multiplied in population as the centuries rolled by until at the beginning of the Christian Era the Jews were substantial and influential elements of the population in such great cities as Alexandria, Rome, Antioch and Babylon, while virtually no city of the empire, from the Atlantic to the Euphrates, was without its Jewish inhabitants. As a whole these Jews of the Dispersion numbered millions, and most of them could count several or even many generations since their ancestors had left the homeland. All their material interests were centered in the lands of their adoption. In the greater part they had ceased to know the Aramaic tongue of Palestine. In most of the empire they were Greeks in speech and culture. But wherever they were they had their synagogues, where they assembled every sabbath for the simple services of worship and to hear the Law expounded. Thus their faith was preserved and their separation maintained, and thus it is still maintained after more than twenty centuries of experience. "The time was to come when Israel was to lose all the ritual paraphernalia of worship, when her temple was to be destroyed, and sacrifice was to cease. But for the Law her faith and her nationality would have perished; but for the synagogue her religion would have ceased to be."[2]

But there was another powerful influence in the development of the religion of the Law, namely, the so-called sect of the Pharisees. If it may be said that the priests established the Law, that the prophets gave it ethical and spiritual content, that the scribes expanded and expounded it, and that the synagogues sustained and nourished it, it may also be said that the Pharisees gave it color, direction and force.

When and how the Pharisees came into existence is not known. The Maccabean revolution, which was primarily religious in its origin and purposes, created a party of religious enthusiasts called the Hasidim, the pious, who for a time gave strong and

[2]Oesterly and Robinson, Hebrew Religion, p. 295.

active support to the revolt. It is supposed that the Pharisees were an outgrowth of this party, but it is an assumption based more on similarity of nature and purpose than upon historical information. The first mention of the Pharisees as such is found in Josephus in connection with Jonathan, brother and successor of Judas Maccabeus (163-141 B.C.) but apparently it was not until the rule of John Hyrcanus (135-105 B.C.) that they appear in history as an influence in public affairs.

Their interest, however, was in religion rather than in politics, and the main object of their concern was the strict observance by the people of the commands of the Law, and particularly the numerous and minute prescriptions of the oral or unwritten law, which in addition to the great body of interpretations coming from the scribes included long existing customs in the nature of common law termed the "traditions of the fathers." The Pharisees, says Josephus, "have delivered to the common people by tradition from a continuous succession of fathers certain legal regulations which are not written in the law of Moses."[3]

It was this insistence upon the validity and force of the unwritten law that brought the Pharisees into conflict with the Sadducees, the aristocratic and priestly party, which rejected the traditions and held that the Torah, the written Law, was the only valid authority. The Sadducees, says Josephus, "say that we are to esteem these observances obligatory that are in the written word, but are not to observe what are derived from the traditions of our forefathers. And great disputes and differences have arisen concerning these things among them, as the Sadducees influence none but the rich and have not the populace on their side, but the Pharisees have the multitude to back them."[4]

The strength and influence of the Pharisees among the people arose partly from the fact that they were drawn almost wholly from the middle class, as heretofore defined, and that they had the temerity to oppose with vigor and often with success the principles and the excesses of the rich and powerful, but partly also because they were regarded as the chief exponents of the Law,

[3]Antiq. Book XIII, Chap. 10, Sec. 6.
[4]Ibid.

whether written or unwritten, which was not only the foundation but the superstructure of the Jewish religion. The people generally looked to them, rather than to the priests, for guidance in observing the Law, as interpreted by the scribes, and held them as a class in high esteem. This respect was not lessened by the fact that they kept themselves coldly aloof from the lower stratum of society, the ignorant and ritually "unclean," and were the stern mentors and disciplinarians of popular conduct that in any way infringed the Law. "They mediated to the people the knowledge of the Law, impressed upon them by precept its authority, and set them the example of punctilious observance of its minutiae."[5]

The Pharisees, in short, were the expression of the Puritan spirit in Judaism. They regarded religion as something to be manifested primarily by the scrupulous observance of innumerable regulations to restrict and control personal conduct and social relations in the intimate details of daily life. They laid particular emphasis upon the manifold rules regarding sabbath observance, and those pertaining to ritual cleanliness, apparently believing that these embodied the first essentials of religious conduct. The importance attached to the sabbath, for example, is expressed in a saying in the Talmud that "if all Jews were to observe two successive sabbaths as they should be observed redemption would ensue at once."[6] It was this insistence upon strict observance of the minute unwritten laws of their complicated ritual, to their comparative neglect of the higher elements of religion, that aroused the anger and opposition of Jesus.

Yet the Pharisees, with all their rigid and extravagant legalism, their intolerance and their bigotry, were a constructive force in the development of Judaism and a persuasive influence in the Jewish life of their time. With the scribes and the synagogues and the schools (which they were instrumental in establishing) they aided materially in giving the religion of the Law a vitality it could hardly have attained or maintained without such agencies.

[5]Moore, Judaism, Vol. I, p. 67.
[6]Shab. 118B.

Moreover, they were imbued, like the Puritans of a later age, with a high sense of duty and devotion.

Thus there grew up in the obscure period here under consideration a veneration for the written Law, the Torah, as a direct revelation of God's will, and as a covenant with him. Upon this was gradually impressed a great body of interpretations and "traditions" which constituted the unwritten law, and which among the people, other than the Sadducees, was looked upon as almost if not quite as sacred as the written Law. And as powerful instruments in the development there came into existence the scribes, the synagogues, and lastly the Pharisees. These, in the time of Jesus, were the elements of the organization and the machinery of the Jewish religion, apart from the temple, its ceremonial worship and its army of priests.

But there was still another instrument, silent but all-powerful, which came into being, for the greater part, in this period. That was the collection of writings which came to be known in much later years as the Hebrew Bible, the Old Testament. When the Israelites began to express their ideas, their traditions, their history, their poetry and their laws in writing, is, of course, unknown. That they began with poetic composition may be assumed from what appears to be the common experience of all primitive people, and it is quite possible that the songs of Miriam and Deborah are the oldest literary productions in the Bible. The words of the prophets were doubtless recorded in some way, either by themselves or their immediate disciples, and except for interpolations of later ages—some of which are of the highest importance, those in Isaiah being of outstanding distinction —may be regarded as contemporaneous. It is supposed that the national glory and prosperity of the reigns of David and Solomon gave initial impetus to literary expression, which during the subsequent periods of the monarchies developed a considerable body of literature most of which perished in the succeeding centuries. In the writings that have been preserved are numerous references to "books" of which nothing otherwise is known, for example, "the Book of Nathan," the "Book of Jasher," the "Book of the Wars of the Lord." At the time of the Exile there

were, no doubt, in existence many books of more or less antiquity and authority, including some of the writings embodying national tradition and history and songs, which with the words of the earlier prophets later became "sacred writ."

But there is good reason to believe that the collection of the books now contained in the Old Testament, with official sanction and declaration of sacredness, began after the Exile and at the beginning of the period here under consideration, specifically at or near the end of the fifth century B.C. It was, of course, the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible, that then were set apart and distinguished, for they contained the basis of the new order and the new religion, the religion of the Law. "It is possible to say with assurance that the first section of the Old Testament to be recognized as Scripture [the Pentateuch] became canonical soon after the year 400 B.C."[7] Other scholars place it somewhat earlier than this but after the middle of the fifth century, when Nehemiah and Ezra inaugurated their peaceful revolution.

While most of the prophetic writings were in existence at the time, it appears that they were not grouped and set aside as canonical Scripture until later. That there was a period after the establishment of the Law when the Book of the Law stood alone is indicated by the fact that the Samaritans, who finally broke off all religious relations with the Judeans about this time, recognized the Pentateuch as holy but did not then or ever after accept any other books as such. Yet at some time between the end of the fifth century and the end of the third, that is to say, between 400 B.C. and 200 B.C., the books of the prophets—which in the old Jewish terminology included Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings—came to be accepted as sacred writings, but little less holy than the books of the Law. This is proved by the reference of Jesus, son of Sirach (200 B.C.) to "the Law and the Prophets" as acknowledged Scripture in his time.

Between that date and the beginning of the Christian Era the other books of the Old Testament, loosely termed "the writings,"

[7]Willett, The Bible Through the Centuries, p. 129.

became recognized as canonical, although Esther, Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon were in controversy until a century later. Perhaps most of them were accepted as sacred before the end of the second century B.C., somewhere between 150 B.C. and 100 B.C. "One is warranted in assuming as most probable that not long after the Maccabean wars of freedom the Jewish community had reached an agreement as to the books of the third canon."[8]

Trattner gives the order, relative significance and probable dates of the three canons as follows: "1. The Pentateuch. Most holy. Made up of five books and probably completed about 444 B.C. 2. The Prophets. Sacred. Made up of twenty-one books and completed by 200 B.C. 3. The writings. Inspired. Made up of thirteen books and completed about 100 B.C."[9]

What is here termed the third canon, and anciently "the writings," included first and most importantly the Psalms, that incomparable collection of hymns in which the spiritual qualities of Judaism were given their loftiest and most beautiful expression, and which for nineteen centuries have been an unfailing source of strength, of courage, of consolation and of inspiration to Christians as well as Jews. Some of these hymns may go back to the time of David but the Psalms as a whole are quite evidently the results of a gradual accumulation of devotional songs through the centuries following the Babylonian Exile, some of them composed as late as the Maccabean revolution, and most of them having some relation to the services of the Second Temple and therefore products of the religion of the Law. They are in themselves refutations of the assertion that the ritual materialism of that religion paralyzed the spiritual perceptions of the people.

In this group also were the Books of the Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah, of priestly origin and believed to have been written about 300 B.C.; the Book of Daniel, the chief of the apocalyptic writings, of still later composition; the masterly drama of Job, the strikingly universalistic Book of Jonah, the tender and exquisite romance of Ruth, and the passionate love songs attributed to Solomon, not to mention all of the books.

[8]Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. III, p. 163.
[9]Unraveling the Book of Books, p. 163.

It is thus to be seen that the Old Testament as a written and collected canon came into existence during this historically shadowy period between the establishment of the religion of the Law and the beginnings of the Christian Era, that some of its books were written within this period, and that it was not completed as a canonical collection until near the time of Jesus. It is obvious, too, that the compilation in the three successive groups was inspired by the same needs and desires that were the motivating impulses in the development of the synagogues, the scribes and the Pharisees, i.e., the elucidation of the Law and the education of the people in the knowledge of the Law.

It was necessary, in the first place, that the Law itself, the fundamental law as expressed in the five books of the Pentateuch, be unified, set apart and sanctified as the basis of all teaching. The reading of the whole Law in weekly installments must have become very early a fixed and required custom of the sabbath services of the synagogues. Then it became necessary that the Law be supplemented by an officially sanctioned collection of the books of the prophets in order that their spiritual teachings might also be imparted in the synagogues. The collection and sanction of the third group followed because they were recognized as inspired writings and useful in the general cause of religious education, although it does not appear that their use in the services of the synagogues was ever specifically authorized. That they were referred to or quoted at will in the homilies of the service is assumed, and it seems that some of the Psalms that were sung or intoned in the temple worship, and perhaps others, were included by custom in the services of the synagogues.

It was therefore in this period that the ardent attachment of the Jews to these collections as sacred writings, and ultimately to the whole as a single collection, later to be known as the Hebrew Bible, gave to them the title of "the people of the book." The world nevertheless must be grateful that this attachment, and the peculiar series of developments here outlined which caused the collection of these books, preserved this incomparable literature for the benefit of humanity in general, for otherwise it no doubt would have perished.

Chapter VIII

BETWEEN THE TESTAMENTS—IDEAS

The preceding chapter presents an outline of the developments in the machinery of the religion of Judaism in the period between the Testaments. Of more importance was the development of religious thought—of the ideas, concepts, and convictions which are the heart of religion—during this period.

The prophets had gradually developed the idea of God from that of a tribal deity to the exalted conception of monotheism, a single God, supreme in the universe, a moral and holy Being, who ruled over all nations but who looked with peculiar and possessive favor upon Israel. But apparently this conception remained in the high and rarefied atmosphere occupied by the prophets until the Exile. There is no indication in the records of the kingdoms (Samuel and Kings) that the people regarded Yahweh as the one and only God. On the contrary, they show that other gods were recognized by them and were being constantly substituted for or associated with Yahweh in their worship. That, indeed, was the accepted cause of the destruction of the kingdoms, and was, in fact, the main cause of the existence of the prophets.

But the circumstances of the Exile forced the people to give concentrated attention to the utterances of the prophets in their search of consolation and hope, and to a new and firmer basis of faith. They realized—or at least the thinkers and leaders among the exiles realized—that only in the prophetic conception of God could there be any reasonable expectation of the fulfillment of the ancient covenant. And so, when the final formulation of the Law was promulgated by Ezra, this conception was firmly embodied in the Pentateuch as a declaration from Moses. "The Lord he is God in heaven above and upon the earth beneath; there is none else."[1] Thereafter, through all the succeeding centuries, it

[1]Deut. 4:39.

remained the predominant and basic idea of the theology of Judaism. Thus it is to be seen that monotheism and the religion of the Law were contemporaneous in their establishment, although both were developments of thoughts and processes long antecedent; and this establishment came at the end of the biblical historical period and was the beginning as well as the basis of most of the developments of the period between the Testaments here under consideration.

Up to the Exile, and for some time thereafter, the Hebrew religion was entirely material and mundane in its scope and expectations. It had no conception of any spiritual hereafter, no idea of a life beyond the grave, other than that dreary abode of Sheol to which all souls were indiscriminately consigned, and where they were apparently beyond the jurisdiction or interest of God. Not even the prophets visioned a blessed immortality for the righteous.

The original covenant declared that the Israelites were the chosen people of a God of power, and it carried a conditional promise of the elevation of the race. From the earliest times there was a belief that there would come a day, when they and He were ready, when God would make them supreme; and throughout their Bible, particularly in the prophets, there are frequent references to the coming "day of the Lord." On this day, it was the confident expectation, he was to descend in his glory to his throne upon Zion and Israel would be independent, happy, and blessed above all nations. The prophets expressed this conviction with varied and striking imagery, but always it was a political, material and terrestrial Kingdom of God which they as well as the people conceived. The prophets, to be sure, endowed this kingdom with moral and spiritual qualities of the highest character, but it was none the less an earthly and physical rule which they visioned.

It was not until long after the Exile and the days of the prophets, not, indeed, until the idea of resurrection became current among the Jews, that the conception of a celestial Kingdom of God in which the righteous among men should share after death had its genesis. Even then it never displaced the older and

more popular expectation of a political and physical Kingdom of God upon earth, with Jerusalem as its capital and the descendants of Abraham as its dominating citizens.

It was in the centuries between the Exile and the Christian Era, and largely in the two centuries preceding the birth of Jesus, that this great national hope began to assume the character of an anticipation not far removed in its fulfillment. The apocalyptic writers gave free wing to their fervid imaginations in predicting this divine revolution, and in describing its nature in the bewildering symbolism peculiar to their kind, and no two of them were in agreement as to details; but they were as one in the conviction, and the assertion, that it would certainly come. No doubt it was the circumstances of the Maccabean revolt that gave birth to the first of the line of apocalyptic writers (the authors of Daniel and the first chapters of Enoch). The next two and a half centuries were filled with events that appealed to the imagination of these anonymous dreamers, and that again and again stirred the minds of the people to lively anticipations of the great day of the Lord anciently foretold by the prophets. At any rate, it was in this period that the writers of the apocalypses flourished, and the conception and the expectation of the Kingdom was more active and vivid in Jewish thought than at any time before or since.

It was in this period also that the idea of "the Messiah" became most pronounced in the Jewish faith and vision, naturally so, for it was necessarily associated with the idea of the Kingdom. It seems, however, to have been a relatively late outgrowth of the primitive conception of the "day of the Lord." In its original expression it was akin to the hope of the restoration of a great national hero common to many races, in this instance a return of David, or one of the seed of David, the ideal warrior king, who would appear in the day of the Lord, and take command of the forces of Israel for the overthrow of the heathen and the establishment of the Kingdom. This material idea of the Messiah was in conformity with the material idea of the Kingdom itself, a material and definitely human leader for a material and definitely physical and earthly empire, and this idea of a political and

essentially military Messiah did not cease to be the prevalent conception of the national hope until long after the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. This was the popular notion in the time of Jesus.

It was not, however, the only notion. Indeed, imagination gave innumerable forms to both the idea of the Kingdom and that of the Messiah in this period between the Testaments. There was at least one other conception of both that was purely material in its expectation. In this the hope of a military and all-conquering Savior of the race was abandoned and the Kingdom was to be somehow established by the direct and irresistible application of divine omnipotence, with the Messiah then appearing and reigning over all thereafter as the vicegerent of God. To many this seemed the more reasonable anticipation when Roman power and dominion were spread over the civilized world and Rome's overthrow by the relatively insignificant forces the Jews could muster appeared to be utterly impossible even with divine aid. And those who held this view counseled patience and discouraged uprisings against Rome. The Kingdom will come in God's own time, they said.

But in the last two centuries before the Christian Era somewhat different conceptions of the Messiah as well as of the Kingdom were developed to which some of the apocalyptic writers gave varied, sometimes fantastic, but always colorful, expression. In these the material ideals were either subordinated to the spiritual or were entirely abandoned for a mystical Kingdom that was not of this earth but that was to be established in heaven after a divine cataclysm had destroyed the wicked and brought the righteous—who could hardly be other than Jews—from their graves, forever to inhabit the new and celestial Jerusalem. A variant of this idea pictured a messianic age upon earth, of long duration—a thousand years being favored—during which the Messiah, the "son of David," should reign, the religion of Israel's God should be universally dominant, happiness, peace, and prosperity should prevail, and at the end of this millennium should come the judgment, the end of the world, and the heavenly Kingdom of God be established. This it is to be seen combined

the older purely earthly and political kingdom with the idea of a spiritual kingdom above noted. Neither of these conceptions could have been imagined in the days of the prophets, for it was not until after the prophetic age had passed that the idea of a blessed life after death for the righteous, with God supreme over that life as over this, came into existence among the Jews.

It is, indeed, this development in the religious thought of Judaism that makes the greatest difference between the religion of Israel in the days of the kings and the prophets, and the religion of Judaism in the time of Jesus. This was to some extent a natural development of the establishment of the Law, and the contemporaneous establishment of monotheism as the fundamental idea of Jewish faith. For the conception of a mutual contract between God and Israel, having its origin in the ancient covenant of Sinai, was made more specific and definite in the elaborate code promulgated by Ezra, which became thereafter the foundation of Judaism. This contract laid upon the people an obligation to observe the Law, and an obligation upon God to reward his people, as a nation, with corresponding advantages. But it was obvious at any time in the history of the Jews after the collapse of the kingdom of David and Solomon, that the expected benefits of this engagement were not perceivable. The condition of the Jews was never superior to the condition of other nations. On the contrary, their condition was inferior to most of them. Through many centuries they were continuously a subject race, constantly experiencing the hardships, the suffering, the humiliation of subjection. But they had an unquenchable faith in the justice of their God and in the ultimate fulfillment of his promises. They were sustained by the conviction that they were his chosen people and that his day and their day would come, sooner or later.

The establishment of monotheism greatly enlarged the field and scope of their vision. When they finally abandoned the view of Yahweh as a tribal god, one of many gods, and accepted the view of the prophets that he was the only God, they were forced to the conclusion that he was the God over all nations and to give consideration to his possible relation to the world at large, as

the prophets had done. Thus in time the national vision became a world vision, and the primitive conception of a coming Kingdom of God limited to Palestine, exclusively Jewish, gave way to the prophetic conception of universal dominion which necessitated some disposition of the Gentiles, whether by extinction, subjection, or absorption.

But such an expression of the idea of God must have suggested a still further expansion of his realm, "for when Yahweh was once conceived as the creator and God of all the earth, the entire existence of man, here and hereafter, came logically under his jurisdiction."[2] Throughout the Old Testament the idea of judgment by God is constant. The entire Book of Joel is devoted to the judgments in the day of the Lord. Isaiah 24 to 27 deals eloquently with the same subject. A feature of such judgment was always retribution, compensation in the way of reward for righteousness and punishment for wickedness. This in the prophets generally applied to the nation collectively. Their conception of religion remained tribal even after they had abandoned the primitive idea of a tribal god. The individual unit had little or no place in their reflections. It is Israel that has sinned, Israel that must repent, Israel that is to be judged, Israel that is ultimately to be glorified. Not until Jeremiah is the individual specifically recognized. "First of all men, as far as we know, Jeremiah lived alone with his God, the world shut out, and he is in a very real sense the father of all individualism in religion, the founder of personal faith."[3] A generation later Ezekiel advanced the idea of personal religion with his stern declaration of personal responsibility. "The soul that sinneth it shall die. . . . But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he has committed and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die."[4] This in turn expressed the idea of personal judgment. "Thus the whole great prophetic doctrine of collective repentance and reformation was translated into a personal religion; it became the condition of salvation for the in-

[2]Charles, Religious Development Between Old and New Testaments, p. 102.
[3]Oesterly and Robinson, Hebrew Religion, p. 220.
[4]Ezekiel 18:20, 21.

dividual Jew as it had been originally for the nation."[5] And thenceforward the dual idea of individualism and nationalism in religion developed a larger and broader conception of the relations of both to their God. It is this development of the personal relation that gives eternal eloquence to the Psalms that have appealed to the individual soul throughout the ages, the twenty-third for example.

Yet at the beginning of the period with which we are here dealing, judgment in all that it involved was a mundane matter for the individual as for the nation. Having no conception of a life after death other than the shadowy existence in Sheol, the rewards and punishments of God were supposed to apply to the individual in this life according to his deserts, and mainly in a material way. Prosperity was believed to indicate God's approval and adversity his displeasure. But once admit that God was concerned in the individual it became increasingly impossible to hold to such a theory and at the same time have faith in the justice of God. There were too many instances of the prosperity of the wicked and the adversity of the righteous. This is the theme of the argument in the remarkable drama of Job, which is in fact a protest against this doctrine. In the end Job finds no solution of the problem, but we can see in this the beginning of the thoughts that must have led to the later conviction of a life after death in which the uncompleted or unexercised justice of God would be fully carried out. At any rate there is no doubt that such a conviction did develop in this period, and at the time of Jesus was the accepted faith of the great majority of the Jews, apart from the Sadducees, who denied it.

This belief involved the bodily resurrection of the dead, for the physical idea of rewards and punishments could not be exterminated, and this in time gave rise to the conception of heaven and hell which we meet in the New Testament, as places where rewards and punishments are meted out. Thus the way was opened for the entry of those spiritual conceptions of the Kingdom of God voiced by the apocalyptic writers, which have been previously mentioned. Once the barriers of death were removed

[5]Moore, Judaism, Vol. II, pp. 501, 502.

the national as well as the individual hope could enter upon a boundless realm untrammeled by the limitations of earth, ecstatic imagination was free to wing its flights into a celestial universe, and calm reason rejoiced in the vast expansion of the possibilities of human life and the greater glory of the God of Israel.

The seeds of this development were implanted within the original structure of the religion of Israel. For just as the primitive conception of a single god for the tribe led eventually through prophetic inspiration to the exalted idea of a single God for the universe, so the contractual relation with that God, the covenant, could find its ultimate full realization only in an extension of time and realm beyond the limitations of earth. "In Judaism," says Dr. George Foote Moore, "the extension of divine retribution beyond the tomb came as a necessary corollary to the idea of God's justice and the assurance of his faithfulness in fulfilling his promises to the righteous."[6] And in the Mishna, that oldest and basic division of the Talmud, it is said that he who says that the resurrection of the dead is not to be inferred from the Law has no part in the world to come.[7] Yet there can be no doubt that this conviction was stimulated, if indeed it did not receive its initial impulse, from the contact of the nation with Persia.

For approximately two centuries the Hebrews were the subjects of the Persian monarchy, and the favor shown to the people by Cyrus in permitting the first return from the Exile in Babylonia, and by Darius in aiding in the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the temple, as well as the apparent leniency of Persian rule generally, must have contributed to sympathetic relations between Persia and Judea. Moreover, the religion of Persia was more in harmony with that of the Hebrews than any other then existing. For Zoroaster was a teacher and leader spiritually akin to Moses, and he taught that there was only one God as the Hebrew prophets had done. Furthermore, his teaching gave emphasis to much the same ethical principles as those of the prophets.

[6] Judaism, Vol. II, p. 310.
[7] Sanhedrin X, 1.

But there were features of the Persian religion that at the time of the Exile were unknown to the religion of the Hebrews, which in the later time here under consideration we find incorporated, in large part, within Judaism. The counterpart of Yahweh in the Persian religion was Ahura-Mazda, supreme lord, omniscient, omnipresent, eternal, creator of the universe, the all good, exercising dominion through angels and archangels. Opposed to him, however, was an evil spirit, Ahriman, with his legions of demons. The two forces of good and evil were believed to be engaged in a struggle for possession of the souls of men. But in due time Ahura-Mazda would triumph; he would send a being called Saoshyant (Savior) to the world, followed by a great judgment of mankind, the resurrection of the dead, destruction of the earth by fire, the annihilation of Ahriman and his demons, and a new spiritual universe, free from evil, sorrow and pain, would come into existence, over which Ahura-Mazda would reign unopposed.

This is a very brief outline, but it seems sufficient to reveal the likeness between the Persian beliefs and those which the Jews adopted in this period between the Testaments, and which were later carried over into Christianity. The development of the idea of a life after death, of a judgment relating to that life, of a blissful hereafter for the righteous and punishment for the wicked, and for a triumphant spiritual Kingdom of God, has been shown in the previous pages of this chapter. Such ideas are not found in the Old Testament. There is perhaps a suggestion of a life after death in the well-known saying of Job found in Chapter 9, verses 25-27 of that drama, although many scholars reject such an interpretation. Also in the eighty-third Psalm and in Isaiah 26 and 53 there are words that apparently express such a belief; yet this, too, is denied by some eminent commentators. At any rate, these are but uncertain approaches to the great thought that was later to develop into a definite faith. Moreover, the writing of the Book of Job is dated by scholars at about 400 B.C., subsequent to the Exile and the promulgation of the Law by Ezra; the eighty-third Psalm is considered of still later date, and the passage of Isaiah is believed by them to be a post-exilic

interpolation. Therefore, on the basis of modern scholarship, it can be said with certainty that this conception of life after death and all the ideas that followed this basic conception were developments of the period with which this chapter deals.

One of these ideas, not hitherto mentioned here, was the belief in an evil spirit, similar in its characters and functions to the Ahriman of the Persians, to which the name Satan was usually applied although other titles were occasionally given to him. No such character with such functions is found in the Old Testament. There are, to be sure, several references to Satan—a number in Job, two in Zechariah, one in Chronicles, and one in Psalm 102. But in all of these Satan is regarded as an angel of God, not at war with him, but an accuser or adversary of man. In the prologue of Job, for example, it is said (1:6) that "there was a day when the sons [angels] of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them." He was admitted into the presence of God without question and conversed fully with them, but had the temerity to oppose the views of God as to the righteousness of this man Job, and God permitted him to put Job to every test possible, save that he must not take his life. Whatever may have been the Persian influence, we have here perhaps the germ of the later conception of Satan as a spirit in outright and determined rebellion against God and a destroyer of the souls of men, and by the time of Jesus he had evidently become the supreme lord of evil, with innumerable subordinate demons at his command, warring constantly against God and man.

In consonance with this idea was the development in the progress of Jewish thought of an elaborate system of angels and demons. In the Old Testament, with the exception of Daniel—which scholars agree must have been written about the time of the beginning of the Maccabean uprising (165 B.C.) and is therefore one of the latest documents in the Jewish canon—angels are usually regarded simply as agents or messengers of God; they are nameless and without distinction or rank. The evil spirits mentioned are of much the same character as in the primitive superstitions of other Semitic races, or, for that matter, all races. "The

devil" is not known to the Old Testament writers. There are references to "devils" but in every instance they refer to the heathen gods. In Daniel, however, and in other books in the two centuries preceding the Christian Era, as well as, of course, the New Testament writings, we discover angels, superior and inferior, some of them with distinctive names, such as Gabriel and Michael, and with division of authority and spheres of activity. Demonology became similarly systematized with Satan at its apex, in the succeeding years.

So, too, the ideas of heaven and hell came into existence in this period. In the Old Testament the Hebrew word which means "heaven" in the English translation, refers always to the firmament, the sky, with all its shining orbs. "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth his handiwork," sang the Psalmist. Somewhere within the heavens was supposed to be the dwelling place of God and his angels, but there was no place in it for the souls of men. There are many references to "hell," in the "authorized version" of the Old Testament with which the Christian world is familiar, but the meaning applied to the Hebrew word Sheol, so rendered in that version, was obviously not that which was given to it in the period with which we are now dealing. For example, in every place in the authorized version of the Old Testament where the word "hell" is used, Moffatt's translation finds the meaning of "Sheol" to be simply death, or the grave, and in a few instances "the underworld," the latter being the broader meaning of Sheol as the abode of the shades of the departed previously referred to. In short, the word "hell" in the authorized version of the Old Testament has no such meaning as is attached to it in the New Testament. But long before the days of Jesus the conception of a life after death in which the righteous would be rewarded and the wicked punished had become fixed in popular Jewish thought, with the full acceptance of the Pharisees, and heaven had been made the abode of the one and hell the abode of the other. And this idea, one of the developments of the period here under discussion, passed into the belief of Christianity.

It is thus to be seen from this outline of the developments of religious thought among the Jews, between the days of Ezra and the days of Jesus, that all of the ideas of the spiritual hereafter that distinguished the Judaism of the later time, and the teachings of Jesus himself, came into existence in the intervening centuries, and were wholly unknown to the writers of the Old Testament, with the exception of the author of Daniel, who is believed by all scholars to have lived and to have written less than two centuries before the time of Jesus, and who therefore belongs to the later period. There are, to be sure, a few passages in Job, the Psalms, and Isaiah that indicate glimpses of something finer beyond the grave than the gloomy depths of Sheol, but these are transient and uncertain, and were at best but faint forecasts of the vivid conceptions of the hereafter that were to come. Yet it should be said that the Jews, the Sadducees excepted, regarded these developments not as revolutionary but evolutionary, having their germ in the Law and the Prophets, and being in no way inconsistent with their more sacred Scriptures.

It may be said, therefore, that all of the Jews in the time of Jesus believed in one God, sovereign in the universe, and in the Pentateuch as his law directly transmitted to them through Moses. And that virtually all the Jews, excluding the Sadducees in particular, believed in the resurrection of the dead, in rewards for the righteous and punishment for the wicked after death, in a heaven and a hell as the places of such retribution, and in a system of angels and demons, with Satan at the head of the latter, ministering to the purposes of these places.

Also the Jews generally believed in the speedy coming of the "day of the Lord," to which that later day had applied the phrase the Kingdom of God or the Kingdom of Heaven. This phrase as an expression of the messianic hope is not found in the Old Testament, nor, for that matter, is the name "Messiah" to be found in the Old Testament in the messianic sense. This hope, as we have seen, had its origin unquestionably in the remote ages of Israel's life, and was expressed by the prophets in various terms, but by the time of Jesus it had taken on, to many at least,

supernatural and supermundane aspects, not conceived or conceivable in the times of the prophets, although the wholly material and political idea of the Kingdom that the prophets had supported was still the most popular.

What the Sadducees thought about the Kingdom is not known but it is obvious from their attitude as to the resurrection of the dead and their disbelief in spirits,[8] that they totally rejected the mystical ideas of its nature, and it may be reasonably inferred from what is known of them that they did not share, or at any rate took little interest, in the popular expectation.

[8] Acts 23:8.

Chapter IX

JEWISH LIFE IN JESUS' TIME

It has been said that Jewish life in the time of Jesus was busy. The Jews were not an indolent people. The high regard in which they held labor is evidence that industry was a prevailing characteristic among them. They worked, if for no other reason than that labor for six days of the week was a solemn injunction of their sacred Law. Nor could wealth or position lift one above respect for labor or some form of participation in work. "Let no one say," says the Talmud, "I am the scion of a noble family and ought not to lower myself by labor."[1] That there were idle rich, particularly among the Sadducean families at Jerusalem, may be assumed, human nature being often so disposed among all people; but where industry was so honored as it was among the Jews idleness in any class could hardly have been approved.

Given, therefore, a race of workers, with economic conditions generally favorable to workers, as they were at this time, and with a country seated at the crossroads of the world's trade, life in Palestine, and particularly in Galilee, must have been busy. The variety of its industrial activities and of its natural resources has been shown, as well as the extent of its domestic and external commerce. Such activities, such resources and such trade are inconceivable without the assumption of a considerable degree of prosperity arriving therefrom.

This statement is not without substantial foundation. Bouchier, in his exhaustive history of "Syria as a Roman Province," says: "Both manufacture and agriculture flourished greatly in Roman times, when trade was encouraged by the safeguarding of the frontiers, the laying out of roads and bridges, and the facilities for commerce with Italy and the West. The keen and growing demand for the luxuries produced in Syria, or brought through from the remote East, was not matched by any great importa-

[1] B. B. 110a.

tions of Western products. Gold and silver to pay for them poured into Asia and the great coast towns became filled with a wealthy population of shippers, merchants, agents and superior artisans who subsisted by foreign trade."[2] This, to be sure, covered a more extensive period than the one here under consideration, but it included it, and under the Roman governmental system of the time Palestine was included in Syria for administrative purposes. The governor of Syria, with his headquarters at Antioch, had jurisdiction over Palestine. Another authority says: "Never has Western Asia flourished so greatly as during the three centuries after Augustus came to the throne. Multitudes of inscriptions testify to the wealth of the civic communities. Many burgesses accumulated much property, which they used for the benefit of their native places. Splendid theaters, aqueducts and public buildings of all kinds were bestowed on the communities. Commerce and manufactures fructified the country."[3] It is impossible that Palestine, at least when it was free from internal conflict, should not have shared in this prosperity. There was peace in Palestine from the beginning of Herod's reign in 40 B.C. to the beginning of the rebellion which ended in the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of Jewish nationality in A.D. 70, with the exceptions of the uprisings that followed the death of Herod (4 B.C.) and that were led by Judas of Galilee in A.D. 6, both of which were quickly and mercilessly suppressed by Varus. Moreover, long before this the Jews had become active and expert traders, learning commerce from the Greeks after they became subject to Alexander and his Greek successors. "Even at this time," says Mommsen, referring to the time of the Caesars, "the predominant business of the Jews was trade. The Jewish traders moved everywhere with the conquering Roman merchants . . . and capital flowed in on all hands to the Jewish by the side of the Roman merchants."[4]

This does not mean, of course, that property was equitably distributed. It has never been in any civilization yet developed. Undoubtedly there were wide contrasts between rich and poor.

[2]p. 161.
[3]Reid, Municipalities of the Roman Empire, p. 375.
[4]History of Rome, Vol. V, p. 418.

But there were no such contrasts as there were in Rome, for example, at this time. For in Palestine slavery was not a serious economic menace, and unemployment on a large scale did not exist. Moreover, the greater proportion of the inhabitants were small landholders, farmers who lived in the villages and towns and obtained an independent if simple subsistence from their own little but intensively cultivated patches of ground.[5] Many others were tenant tillers of similar patches, and still others were hired or share laborers on the large estates of wealthy landowners. The soil, that is to say, provided sustenance for most of the people. The numerous artisans who composed the next largest element of the population could hardly have been impoverished in the midst of the prevailing prosperity of the country, for the competition of slavery in this field seems to have been negligible.

There were, as has been said, no fixed class distinctions other than that resulting from an hereditary priesthood. This, to be sure, created an ecclesiastical aristocracy, and also, by reason of the revenues by which it was sustained, an aristocracy of wealth. But this aristocracy, apart from Jerusalem, where it was concentrated, seems to have had singularly little influence upon the social, or even the religious, life of Palestine, except in the political activities of the Sanhedrin, in which it was largely represented and of which the chief priest was the head. As ministers of the temple the priests were honored, as members of the Sanhedrin their decisions were respected, but the people did not look to them for religious guidance, and in fact rejected their Sadducean beliefs and principles. The priests apparently held themselves apart and did not enter into the life of the people. The narratives of the Gospels disclose no contacts with priests, nor is there any save the most incidental mention of priests, until the culmination of the events brings the characters up to the temple and the Sanhedrin.

There was, however, an aristocracy of religion, apart from the priests, in the Pharisees and their associates. This was not an aristocracy of birth or condition; anyone who wished, and who

[5]Klausner, Jesus of Nazareth, p. 179.

could meet the requirements of the sect, could be a Pharisee. It was in that sense a democratic institution. But none the less the Pharisees were a separate class, which stood above and over the masses, commanded their reverence and to a considerable extent ordered their lives. Although their numbers were not large—some 6,000 in all Palestine, Josephus estimates—they exercised a potent and pervasive influence upon Jewish life throughout the country. It was less in Galilee than in Judea, for the Galileans seem to have been more liberal minded than their southern brethren; yet the Gospels prove the power and the activity of the Pharisees even in Galilee. But their insistence upon the scrupulous performance of the minute commands of the "traditional" or oral as well as the written Law created a social cleavage between those who were educated in the Law and endeavored to comply with its innumerable prescriptions and those who were unlearned or negligent in these matters. The latter, of course, were mainly among the poorer population, and especially the farming population. The Pharisees looked upon the Am-haretz, the "people of the land" as they called them, with contempt and animosity, as transgressors of the Law and as persons whose very touch was defilement. "There can be no doubt," says the Jewish Encyclopedia, "that it was this contemptuous and hostile attitude of the Pharisaic schools toward the masses that was the chief cause of the triumphant power of the Christian church. In preaching the good tidings to the poor and the outcast, Jesus of Nazareth won the great masses of Judea."

Thus, while there were no hereditary classes apart from the priesthood, and no caste distinctions fixed by law or custom, there was, in addition to the usual cleavage between the poor and the rich, a separation of the educated from the uneducated, the literate from the illiterate, the scrupulous from the negligent, that was peculiarly intolerant because it was religious in its nature and its motives. And this antipathy of the Pharisees and those who carefully followed their rigorous prescriptions, toward the Am-haretz, applied to the taxgatherers, the publicans, because of their calling, regardless of their education or conformity to the law in other respects, and to all Gentiles. Social

relations with such were forbidden and trade relations between them subjected to numerous restrictions.

Now in fairness it needs to be conceded that there was logic in all this. It was not mere bigotry. It followed naturally from the idea of ritual holiness, or separation, prescribed in the Torah, and from the conceptions of ritual cleanliness developed by the scribes. The Law, it was devotedly believed, came directly from the hand of God, and the smallest detail of it was as mandatory as the largest. Therefore any Jew who failed to observe the rigid prescriptions of the Law in all the minutiae of its interpretations by the scribes, whether by reason of ignorance or negligence, was a transgressor, a sinner, who not only contaminated the pious by his touch, but who stood in the way of that national righteousness which was believed to be the condition of the fulfillment of God's promises to his people. As to the Gentiles, they were, of course, outside the Law, presumably enemies of the God of Israel, and "unclean."

But such prohibitions have been found to be more or less impracticable in all the experience of mankind, and the very existence of this strong feeling as to the masses of the Jews is evidence that the laws were not observed by the majority of the people with that scrupulous exactness the Pharisees demanded. We need not believe that this was due to any lack of devotion to, or veneration for, the Law, among the common people, although it would be strange if that were not true as to many of them; but it was clearly impossible for the whole people to have the means, the time or the capacity for that instruction in the knowledge of the Law which the Pharisees regarded as the sine qua non of righteousness. Moreover, the sheer necessities of life must have compelled social and economic relations between the Jews who were pious, according to Pharisaic standards, and those who were not, and between all the Jews and the Gentiles, who were more numerous in Galilee than in Judea. In short, the ideal legalism of the Pharisees was not attained, or attainable, by the whole people, because the Jews were human beings with human limitations and necessities and with those variations of capacity, temperament, disposition and condition common to all humanity.

Nevertheless, it seems to have been true that the Jews were peculiarly a religious people. There can be no doubt that they were as a whole exceptionally devoted to their religion, venerated its traditions, looked upon the Law as a divine revelation, observed, in at least some degree, its commandments, respected the sabbath, joined at times the worshipers at the temple during the great annual feasts and however lowly or ignorant regarded themselves as members of a superior race. Moreover, it seems clear that however irritating the insistent particularism of the Pharisees may have been, the people generally, the Sadducees excepted, looked upon them as the exponents and guardians of their religion, and recognized the scribes among them as the authorities in the interpretation of the Law.

It is certain also that among the Jews religion was not a mere incident of life but the center about which all life revolved, the mainspring of Jewish existence. The Jew began each day with the reading or recitation of the Shema, which was, and is still, the Jewish confession of faith, and begins with the declaration: "Hear, O Israel: the LORD our God is one LORD [i.e., the only God]: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." (Deut. 6:4, 5.) This was followed by a prayer, usually a part or a contraction of the formal prayer called the Shemoneh Esrah, which was required to be uttered standing in a reverent attitude. The Shema was again recited on retiring, the Jews thus beginning and ending the day with the confession of faith. Prayer, a grace, was also prescribed before and after each meal. Thus the Jew had the foundation of his faith ever before him, and prayer, however perfunctory it may have been, was a fixed and constant habit, which there is reason to believe no Jew worthy of the name ever neglected.

Religion was greatly fortified by the sabbath, an institution peculiar to the Jews. "Nothing corresponding to it existed in the Greek and Roman world, nor, so far as known, elsewhere in antiquity."[6] It alone set out the Jews as a race singular and apart. Among them it was regarded as a fundamental of their religion and they reverenced it and observed it with extraordinary faithfulness

[6]Moore, Judaism, Vol. II, p. 23.

and devotion. And this attitude toward the sabbath was not weakened by expatriation. Throughout the Roman Empire, wherever Jews resided, there the sabbath was honored by them as an essential duty of their faith and of their race. Because of this the Roman emperors and governors generally, as Josephus tells us, relieved the Jews from military obligations because military service was incompatible with their observance of the sabbath, and the Jews would die rather than violate the injunctions of the Mosaic law respecting this day. It was primarily a day of rest, and all work, even the most necessary, was strictly prohibited. But it was no less a holy day, and to keep it holy by careful abstention from forbidden action was essentially a religious function and supremely a religious duty. This being the case it became in course of time, if indeed it were not so from the beginning, a day especially devoted to worship, and to the thoughts, the conversations, the readings and the studies pertaining to religion. The Jew who failed to keep the sabbath in accord with its primary regulations became inevitably a social as well as a religious outcast.

But it was in no sense a gloomy day. On the contrary, it was generally a day of pleasure. From long custom the restrictions which seemed unbearably onerous to other people rested lightly upon the Jewish mind. Feasting was not only permissible but enjoined. The best food was prepared for it, the best wine reserved for it, the best clothes donned for it. Decorum was required, but cheerfulness was the characteristic note of the day.

The sabbath began at sunset on Friday evening and ended at sunset on Saturday. The necessary cooking was done by the housewives or the servants on Friday, cooking being prohibited on the sabbath. The choicest dishes were brought out and polished for sabbath use, the sabbath garments, the finest that could be afforded, made ready. As the sun passed below the horizon the sound of a trumpet was heard from the synagogue, the signal that the sabbath was beginning. Six blasts were sounded with an interval between each so that the workers could be given sufficient warning to cease their labors. Before it became dark the sabbath lamp was lighted, and then the family and

attendants gathered about the table for the ceremonial meal which opened the observances of the day. This began with the recitation of the "Kiddush," a special benediction for the occasion, over a cup of wine, which the master of the house first sipped and then passed around the circle. Then followed the meal, as sumptuous as circumstances would permit.

In the morning everyone who was able gathered at the synagogue, which in every community was the center of Jewish life. The congregation sat upon the floor, in accordance with oriental custom, the leading members in the front, in recognition of their official or social station, "the chief seats," and no doubt the men and women sat in separate divisions. The congregational service began, as the day began with the individual, with the recitation of the Shema, followed by a prayer. This presumably was at least the nucleus of that which only a little later (first century A.D.) became definitely fixed in the Shemoneh Esrah, the Eighteen Benedictions, which still survives in Jewish synagogual services. Then followed the reading of a portion of the Law, which constituted the main reason and purpose of the gathering. After this came a reading from the prophets, followed by a discourse. This is the order of service given in the Mishnah, the older and basic division of the Talmud.[7]

The prayer was uttered by someone of the congregation called upon by the ruler of the synagogue, the members participating only in certain responses, from which arose the expression "to lead in prayer." The ruler also usually selected the person or persons (they might be as many as seven) to read the Scriptures, and the one who was to speak. There was no such thing as an ordained ministry. Anyone competent to do so might read or discuss the passages that had been read. If scribes or Pharisees were present they were doubtless given the preference for either task because of their recognized knowledge of the Law, but not necessarily so. The Scripture was read in the original Hebrew, and the reader was accompanied by an interpreter who translated the Hebrew into the common speech, paragraph by paragraph, for the benefit of those members unable to understand the ancient

[7]Megillah 18-3.

tongue. The Law was read consecutively from beginning to end, so divided into weekly sections that the entire Pentateuch was read in three and a half years, when the process was started over again. Apparently no such regularity was practiced in the readings from the Prophets. The ruler might select passages for the day or the reader himself might make his own selection. The discourse, sermon, homily, whatever it might be termed, was based upon the Scriptures read, and was doubtless generally, if not always, an interpretation or application of the lesson in which other books of the Bible than the Law and the Prophets might be cited and quoted.

We may be fairly certain, indeed, that the Psalms were not neglected in these sabbath discussions, and that they were used as hymns at some part or parts of the service. That there was music of some sort is not to be doubted, for music, vocal music, was a constant feature of Jewish gatherings, religious or social, often, as in the temple, with instrumental accompaniment. And the Psalms, of course, constituted the sacred songbook of the race. All of them were evidently written for and set to music and many of them must have been as familiar to every Jew as the basic passages of the Law itself.

After the morning's service the congregation dispersed leisurely to their homes for the noon meal, where it was considered a privilege to have one or more guests. There was usually another brief and simpler service at the synagogue in the afternoon and the sabbath came to an end with the sinking of the sun and the sound again of the trumpets, indicating to all that the customary labors of the weekday might be resumed. There were, however, additional services in the synagogue on Mondays and Fridays, probably not so well attended.

Another institution, which helped to attach the Jew to his religion, and incidentally to the synagogue, and which had a large influence upon secular as well as religious life—if, indeed, such a distinction can be made in a people whose religion so permeated all life—was the schools. Among no people of the age was education so highly honored, or its elements so nearly universally attainable, as among the Jews. Just how general it was in the time

of Jesus cannot be definitely determined but there is much evidence to warrant the belief that elementary education, in a system of community-supported public schools, was fairly well established throughout Palestine, supplemented by higher schools in the populous centers, particularly Jerusalem, for more advanced learning. "Our principal care of all," says Josephus, "is to educate our children well."[8] This education, to be sure, was restricted to the Law, but it necessarily required the attainment of the ability to read, and perhaps to write, which constitutes the foundation of all education. The community schools were conducted in the synagogues because their primary object was religious training, and thus the Jew at home, in the school and in the synagogue was constantly impressed with the importance as well as the motive of his religion.

Still another potent influence in the religious life of the Jew of that period was that of the three great annual festivals, which perhaps stirred the emotions of the race as no other regular events could have done.

The first of these, in order of time, was the Passover, which was held each year in the month Nisan, which corresponded, although inexactly, with our April. This was, in a way, a celebration of the birthday of Israel, a national commemoration of the deliverance of the Hebrews from Egypt. It was therefore a patriotic as well as a religious festival. It was also a harvest festival, as it came at the beginning of the grain harvest. The second of these festivals came seven weeks after the Passover and celebrated the end of the grain harvest, in June. This was called the Feast of the Weeks, but the Greek name, Pentecost, was frequently applied to it. The third of the great feasts came at the end of the fruit harvest, in October; it was the termination, indeed, of the entire harvest season, and was the supreme occasion for rejoicing and thankfulness. It was called the Feast of the Tabernacles because it commemorated the time when the Israelites dwelt in tents, or tabernacles, in the wilderness after their deliverance from Egypt, and the most conspicuous feature of its observance, apart from the religious rites, was the erection of temporary booths or arbors by all the people,

[8]Against Apion, 1-8.

symbolizing the tabernacles of the wilderness, and theoretically if not actually residing within these booths during the period of the festival, seven days. The Passover also lasted seven days, but Pentecost only one.

These bare facts, well known to every Bible student, are stated merely to call attention to the part they played in the life of the people. Their observance was explicitly commanded by the Law, and all the males from the age of puberty upward were required to go to the temple at Jerusalem to celebrate each of these feasts. "Three times in a year," declared the Law, "shall all thy males appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose: in the feast of unleavened bread [the Passover], and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles; and they shall not appear before the LORD empty: every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD thy God which he hath given thee." (Deut. 16:16, 17.) That is to say, every man must not only attend at the temple but bring an offering at each of these feasts.

However, it is unbelievable that this law could have been literally obeyed in the time of Jesus. Compliance may have been practicable in the age of Moses, or even when the Law in its fullness was established in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah, for in the latter time Judea was a very small area about Jerusalem, and its activities, relatively simple, were centered in the city of the temple. Moreover, it is quite probable that all of the male Jews within Judea could then have assembled within and about Jerusalem. Conditions were quite different at the beginning of the Christian Era. Palestine was of much greater area, most of it was densely populated, and its economic life was far more complicated. That all of its male inhabitants above the age of twelve or thirteen could have gathered at Jerusalem three times a year—not to mention the millions of Jews scattered over the Roman world, who were as subject to the command as those of the home land—is utterly incredible.

But there is ample evidence that multitudes of Jews, not only from the provinces of Palestine but from every land, assembled at Jerusalem on these festive occasions. The roads then were thronged

with pilgrims going up to Zion, and the religious fervor of the race reached its height in the gatherings of Israel at the temple for the picturesque and impressing ceremonies which crowned their faith.

* * * * *

In this and the preceding chapters the conditions of life in the Roman Empire and the land of Jesus have been briefly outlined, and the religious background indicated. Jesus was a product of his age and his race. Whatever may be one's belief as to the nature of his origin there can be no doubt that the development of his incomparable personality was influenced by his environment, and that his faith and his mission had their sources in his spiritual heritage. Only a Jew nurtured in the love of Israel and imbued with its unique conceptions could have given birth to the religion he proclaimed, and the unique circumstances of the time seem to have set the stage for the great drama in which he was to play the leading part. He had necessarily to deal with the world of his day, with men and conditions as he found them. Therefore, if we seek to understand his character, his teachings, his conduct and his purposes, it is essential that we know something of the influences which affected his career. It has been the aim of the preceding chapters to throw some light upon these matters and thus to prepare the way for a clearer understanding of the personality of Jesus.

SECTION II

THE LIFE

Chapter X

NAZARETH

Except for the brief period of his ministry Jesus apparently spent all of his life from infancy onward in Nazareth. There is no certainty as to this, but in the absence of any information to the contrary it is assumed to be so. The Gospels (Matthew and Luke) take him to Nazareth soon after his birth and find him there at the beginning of his ministry. There is no reason to question the soundness of the common inference that it was his home throughout the interval.

Nazareth, therefore, and its surroundings were a factor of importance in the development of the personality of Jesus. It was here that he passed his childhood, his youth, and most of the years of his manhood. It was here that he received those first impressions which exercise such a potent influence in the building of the character of every man. It was here that he acquired an elementary education of no small scope although doubtless limited in range by the rigid restrictions of the Jewish schools. It was here that he obtained that intimate knowledge of the Scriptures he was later to reveal with impressive aptness. It was here that he became so marvelously acquainted with the varying aspects of human life. It was here that the forms and moods of nature made indelible impressions upon his sensitive consciousness. It was here, most likely, that his thoughts developed form, significance, and purpose. It was here, we must believe, that he began that close and understanding communion with Deity that was to make him prophet par excellence and supreme leader of man.

No place could have been better chosen for the creation and progressive unfolding of such a character. Situated in a saucer-like depression in the mountains of southern Galilee, surrounded as in an amphitheater by no less than fifteen swelling hills, Nazareth seems, indeed, to be set in "Nature's own sanctuary." The neighborhood must have presented in that day a scene of incomparable beauty. When we recall Josephus' description of the richness and fertility of Galilee in general, the infinite variety and

profusion of its products, the lavishness of nature in its adornment, and apply it to this hallowed vale, we can easily imagine the verdure of its hills, the amplitude of its fields, vineyards, and orchards, the glory of its flowers, and the blue canopy which arched seemingly close above it, covering it as it were with a royal mantle, brilliantly studded with gold when the night came. In a way it was closed in, a fitting place for the spiritual nurture of a great soul.

And yet it was not remote or separate. Near, if not through, Nazareth passed one of the great highways, leading from the seaport of Acca or Ptolemais, the Acre of later days, to the Lake of Galilee and the crossing of the Jordan to the rich cities of the Decapolis. But a few miles to the east ran the ancient highway from Egypt to Damascus and the lands of the Tigris and Euphrates. Thus it stood within sight of the crossing of two of the busiest and most important trade routes of the Orient over which passed much of the varied traffic of the empire. It stood in a sense at the crossroads of the world, for the caravans of all nations that mattered in the civilization of the time traversed these highways. By Nazareth flowed the currents of commerce and industry. The marching of Roman legions, the proud parade of Roman embassies, could not have been unfamiliar to its inhabitants. The pomp and power and riches of a materially glorious age passed, as it were, in review before them. No one living in Nazareth could have been ignorant of the world at large, or without some impression of the nature of its pulsing life.

Nor does it seem likely that a town so placed could have been the small and insignificant village it is commonly supposed to have been. Inhabited by an industrious people, as was every Galilean town in those days, a people with a genius for trading that was not lacking even then, and in a fertile region that furnished materials for trade, it is difficult to believe that the great avenues of commerce hard by did not contribute to its population and material well-being.

The Gospels themselves furnish no reason for the assumption that Nazareth was a little village. On the contrary, in every reference to the place that throws any light on its size it is called a "city." Matthew, speaking of Joseph, says "he came and dwelt

in a city called Nazareth."[1] Luke says "Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee named Nazareth,"[2] and again he says, "Joseph also went up from Galilee out of the city of Nazareth."[3] Nowhere in the Gospels, or in the New Testament, is Nazareth called a "village." The terms "city" and "village" were not used indiscriminately in those days. "The Hebrews," says a competent authority, "distinguished in size between villages and cities,"[4] and it is a fair presumption that Jews of a later time continued so to distinguish them, as, for that matter, people of all lands and times have done. At any rate it is a reasonable presumption that the Gospel writers would not have applied the term "city" to a small village. It is worth while to recall also that Josephus said that Galilee contained 204 cities and villages none of which had less than 15,000 inhabitants. This is generally considered an exaggeration but it at least indicates that Galilee was filled with populous communities, and Nazareth, in view of what has been stated above, could hardly have been among the smallest of them. It is true, of course, that Josephus neglected to mention Nazareth, but then he neglected to mention some 150 other towns of Galilee. He was not engaged in the compilation of a gazetteer.

Too much importance has been attached to the question of Nathanael, recorded in the Gospel of John, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Upon this single exclamation of wonder by one who lived in the neighboring town of Cana has been based an assumption that Nazareth was not only a little village but a contemptible little village, an assumption that is often stated as a definitely known fact. Renan, for example, says the saying of Nathanael was a "popular proverb," indicating the "particularly bad" reputation of Nazareth,[5] yet his only justification for this broad statement is the passage from John which in a footnote he describes as "weak authority"—as, indeed, it is for such an assertion. The exclamation of Nathanael can be reasonably interpreted as meaning no more than astonishment that the Messiah, whom Jesus was represented to Nathanael to be, could come from such a

[1] 2:23.
[2] 1:26.
[3] 2:4.
[4] Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. IV, p. 104.
[5] Renan, Life of Jesus, 13-152.

place rather than greater or more sacred spots. The writers of the Synoptic Gospels, who were much closer to the time than the author of the Gospel of John, and whose accounts have greater historical value, nowhere reflect upon the reputation of Nazareth. Moreover, if Nazareth was held in popular contempt, as Renan's statement implies, it could hardly have been obscure, and if it was either obscure or contemptible it seems strange that this was not reflected somewhere in the Synoptic Gospels. Wherever Jesus went he was known as Jesus of Nazareth, yet apparently no one found it necessary to inquire where Nazareth was, and no one spoke scornfully of his home town. On the whole, one seems warranted in saying that Nazareth was not diminutive, obscure, or contemptible; that, on the contrary, it was a fairly populous place, one of the minor cities of Galilee, of much the same character as other predominantly Jewish towns of that province.

It is not improbable, however, that it was relatively a new town. The fact has been noted that for centuries the Galilean region had been in pagan hands, that at the time of the Maccabean revolt its Jewish inhabitants were so few in number that Judas brought them to Jerusalem for safety, that it was not restored to Jewish control until about a century before the time of Jesus, and yet at the beginning of the Christian Era its very large population was mostly Jewish. There must, therefore, have been an extensive emigration of Jews from other regions into fertile Galilee during that century, and many new towns must have sprung into being in consequence. Nazareth may well have been one of these.

Enclosed within its surrounding hills Nazareth was in a sense secluded, but it was, as has been said, in direct contact with the currents of the world. More than that, it was a place where one with a little effort could obtain a view of far horizons. An inhabitant of that town had but to climb one of the higher hills immediately at hand to find the world spread out before him in miniature. To the south was the broad sweep of the plain of Esdraelon, rich in history as it was rich, at that time, in the products of its fields. To the east could be seen in the near foreground the perfect dome of Mount Tabor, and the colorful caravans following the highway that skirted its base. Beyond that a varied

picture of Galilean verdure and the white walls of towns, with perhaps a glimpse of the lofty Grecian columns of Gadara on the heights beyond Gennesaret. To the north a similar picture, with loftier elevations leading up to the snow-capped peak of Mount Hermon, and near at hand the rich and beautiful city of Sepphoris. To the westward the great sea, its waves breaking upon the white sands far below, and its waters dotted with the sails of the ceaseless and busy traffic of the empire. In imagination one could extend that vista onward to that proud and profligate metropolis from whence Caesar ruled the world.

Nazareth, in short, was an admirable place for contemplation, and it offered endless opportunities for observation of nature and of human life, not only the life of a typical Jewish community, but the varied aspects of life in the broad empire of Rome. More than that, it was placed in the Galilean hills, where the free winds of the heavens, fresh from the sea or carrying the warmth of the east without its sand and dust, played about it. It was in an atmosphere of larger freedom, too, in men's thoughts than that which encompassed the relatively arid and rigid life of Judea. In Galilee the highland spirit of independence was stronger than elsewhere. The Galileans generally were more emotional, impulsive, less bound by the rigid code of Judaism but more fervent in their piety. Their closer contact with the numerous gentile population imbued in them the extremes of tolerance or fierce hatred. Here were bred those passionate and fanatical nationalists, the Zealots, in whom the yeast of violent revolution was constantly working. And here were found those finer souls, of broader minds and higher aspirations, who had given the Judaism of the day its loftiest and most spiritual ideals. Here, we may well believe, were written most of those anonymous books under the names of ancient worthies, such as Moses, Enoch, and Solomon, technically termed the apocalyptic and pseudepigraphical writings, which exercised such a large influence in the spiritual development of the nation. "This literature," says Charles, "was written probably for the most part in Galilee, the home of the religious seer and mystic."[6]

It was in this place, amid these scenes, among these people, and in this atmosphere that Jesus grew up from infancy to manhood.

[6]Religious Development Between the Testaments, p. 9.

Chapter XI

THE CHILDHOOD OF JESUS

Jesus was born into a respectable family of noble lineage. Whatever the authenticity, or lack of it, in the differing genealogies of Matthew and Luke, they indicate the existence of a belief that Joseph at least was a descendant of David. Inasmuch as both genealogies are inconsistent with the claim of supernatural paternity for Jesus presented by these writers, the only excuse for their publication would seem to be that they found them in the sources from which they drew and passed them along as matters of current record or tradition. It is hardly likely that either would have invented genealogies that weakened the main contention of their introductory chapters, even if it could be supposed that they were capable of such pious frauds.

Nor is it likely that the term "Son of David" could have been applied to Jesus without denial or refutation unless there was some substantial support for it. At least the royal line of David, down to Zerubbabel, was fairly well established, and after the Exile, if not before, genealogical records became an important factor in the maintenance of the racial separation, and were regarded as particularly essential in the preservation of the purity of the priestly succession. "Hence their genealogies were scrupulously kept, and when necessary minutely investigated. A special officer seems to have been entrusted with these records, and a court of inquiry is mentioned as having been instituted in Jerusalem.... A priest was bound to demonstrate the purity of the pedigree of the priestly maiden he desired to wed, even as far back as her great-great-grandfather and great-great-grandmother. In the case of marriage with a daughter of Levi or of Israel his scrutiny had to extend a degree further."[1] It follows, therefore, that there had to be more or less dependable records not only of the priestly lines, but of those outside the priestly class, for a priest was permitted to marry a woman not of priestly descent only if her Jewish pedigree for at

[1]Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. V, p. 597.

least five generations was unimpeachable. Such pedigrees could not have been demonstrated without records.

Moreover, it was a well-established belief, founded upon sacred prophecy, that the Messiah would be a scion of David. This belief could hardly have persisted if there were no families or persons extant that were supposed to be descendants of David, and unless there were many reputed to be "of the seed of David" interest and expectation would have concentrated, in these times particularly, upon the few, which evidently was not the case. That the claim of Davidic descent was, to say the least, not unique is indicated by the Talmudic references to Hillel and Gamaliel as being of the house of David. Jesus, "as was supposed"—to use the phrase of Luke—was the son of Joseph, and it is upon this that the claim of Davidic descent is based, for there is no definite claim that Mary herself was a descendant of David, although it is a common orthodox assumption that she was, and she may have been at that. Luke says in two places and Matthew in one, apart from the genealogies, that Joseph was of the house of David. Paul, whose writings antedated the Gospels, regarded Jesus as being of the line of David (Romans 1:3) and the author of Revelation had the same conviction (5:5; 22:16). It is a fair presumption, therefore, that this was commonly believed to be a fact, and if so it must have given Joseph a certain standing as a Jewish citizen at least a little above the average.

As to Mary, her definitely asserted social status, measured by descent, was but little, if any, less high than that of Joseph, if the chronicle of Luke can be accepted as historical in this particular. For he states that she was a cousin of Elisabeth, who was not only the wife of a priest but herself of the daughters of Aaron, which means that she was one of the aristocratic priestly class by right of descent. At any rate it is clearly implied in these Gospels that both Joseph and Mary, however lowly their present circumstances, were of the best blood of Israel.

Nor is there anything in the Gospel records to justify the common assumption that the family into which Jesus was born was very poor. On the contrary, such evidence as the introductory chapters of Matthew and Luke present (and there is no other evi-

dence) indicates that Joseph was in fairly comfortable circumstances. If, as Luke asserts, Joseph journeyed from Nazareth to Bethlehem to be taxed, he must have possessed taxable property, or else presumedly the means to pay the tax, whatever form of taxation may have followed such registration. The statement that there was no room for Joseph and Mary at the inn presupposes that they had applied for lodging at the inn and had the money to pay the price. Matthew tells of a journey of Joseph and Mary, with the infant Jesus, to Egypt, where they remained for some time. Such a journey, and such a residence abroad, must have involved no little expense. Luke describes Joseph, together with Mary and the child Jesus, going to Jerusalem from Nazareth, some twelve years after the birth of Jesus, and he says "his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover," which they could hardly have done without some means to pay the costs of these annual journeys and to present the required offerings.

The only statement in these Gospels that might indicate a degree of poverty is that Mary and Joseph, certain days after the birth of Jesus, went up to Jerusalem to offer the required sacrifice of purification for her, "according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, a pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons." The law referred to here, found in Leviticus 12:6-8, prescribes that a woman after childbirth shall bring a lamb as a burnt offering and a young pigeon or a turtle dove as a sin offering, but if she is unable to bring a lamb she may "bring two turtle doves or two young pigeons, the one for the burnt offering and the other for the sin offering." However, the law made no distinction in merit or efficacy between these alternatives, and it is not improbable that the latter was by far the more common form of sacrifice in such circumstances, and not necessarily an evidence of poverty. Certainly there is no such implication in Luke's reference to it.

There is, indeed, nothing in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke upon which the prevalent impression that Jesus was born into poverty could have been based. To be sure, Joseph was a carpenter, but among the Jews labor was honored, as has been said, and the artisan, whatever his trade—with the exception of a few, such as tanning, which were regarded as ritually unclean—was highly

respected. Moreover, he was not usually lacking in these days, for the reasons heretofore stated, in fairly remunerative employment. It is quite probable, therefore, that the home at Nazareth in which Jesus was brought up was as comfortable and as well supplied with the necessities of life as the average home in that town. No doubt it was the small, flat-roofed abode, of no architectural attraction, that seems always to have been the abiding place of the masses of the population in oriental towns, and it was very meagerly furnished, according to modern ideas, but, if so, it was in accord with the standards of the times, and the people generally were contented with such habitations. Only the rich—and we have no reason to believe that Joseph was among these—possessed more elaborate residences. But we may assume that in this home of Jesus there were ample food and raiment for the simple needs of the family. And we may also safely assume, Joseph and Mary being what they were, and being Jews, it was a home pervaded by love and ordered by devout piety.

Except for a few general words as to the nature of his development and the relation of a single episode of his childhood, in Luke, the Gospels have nothing to say about Jesus from the beginning of his life in Nazareth to the beginning of his ministry when he was thirty years old, according to Luke. What were the events of those thirty years; what were the influences that helped to shape his character? To these questions there is no answer in the canonical records. But we are not lacking in detailed information as to the principles, rules, and methods current in the rearing and education of Jewish children, and we may reasonably suppose that Jesus was subject to the same conditions as other boys of his race and time in pious families. Luke says that "the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him," and again he says that "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man," which indicates that his development proceeded along normal lines.

We are justified, therefore, in believing that he grew up in a deeply religious atmosphere, and amid surroundings that promoted habits and thoughts of religion. From his birth he was being constantly trained in the ideas, the traditions and the individual cere-

monials of the religion of Judaism. As he lay on his mother's breast he heard over and over again the songs of Israel and became familiar with their strains long before he understood their words or their import. And before he had learned to speak, his eye had grown accustomed to certain simple acts of formal worship that were essential in the daily routine of family life. The morning recitation of the Shema, the daily prayers, the blessing of the bread and wine, the lighting of the sabbath lamp, were incidents which were continuously impressed upon his vision and later upon his consciousness. Almost the first words he learned, which the Law required the father to teach, were the opening phrases of the Shema, "Hear O Israel, the LORD thy God is one God." And repeatedly through the day he could see Joseph or Mary or visitors, as they passed through the door, touch a curious little box fixed to the upper part of the right-hand doorpost, and hear them utter the brief prayer, "May God keep my going out and my coming in from now on and evermore." This object was called the mezuzah, and no building could be legally occupied as a residence without it, its character and position being definitely prescribed by the Law. It contained a strip of parchment on which were inscribed the scriptural passages, Deut. 6:4-9 and 11:13-21, identical with the part of the Shema taken from Deuteronomy. Very early in life he began to find entertainment in the stories of many kinds with which the history and the traditions of Israel abound, stories that had a peculiar thrill for every imaginative child, as fascinating as any modern fairy tales, and yet somehow directly connected with the religion and the patriotism of the race. They were stories of their own people, their own heroes, their own struggles, their triumphs and defeats, and above all, of their own God. Every Jewish boy, even before he arrived at school age, was made more or less familiar with the dramatic events of Israel's past by the relation of these wonder tales, and he had besides obtained the rudiments of an education in the fundamental elements of the Law by the precepts, examples, and domestic ceremonies that were constantly impressed upon his budding consciousness.

At about the age of six Jesus, we may safely assume, began to attend school at the synagogue. The schools have been briefly men-

tioned in previous chapters. Here seems to be an appropriate place for a more detailed consideration of education among the Jews. Josephus, who lived very close to the time of Jesus, gives high praise to the amplitude and thoroughness of education in his country. The Law, he says, "commands us to bring our children up in learning and to make them conversant with the laws, and acquainted with the acts of their forefathers, that they may imitate them, and being nourished up in them may neither transgress them nor have any ignorance of them."[2] And again he says, though no doubt with exaggerated enthusiasm, "If anybody do but ask any of our people about our laws he could more easily tell them all than he could tell his own name. For because of our having learned them as soon as ever we became sensible of anything, we have them as it were engraven on our souls."[3]

It is evident from this that education in the Law commenced in infancy at the home, as heretofore stated, and was thereafter extended more systematically and thoroughly in the schools, beginning at an early age. To be sure, it was confined to the Law, and to the scriptural writings related to the Law, but to the Jews of this time no other learning was considered necessary or desirable. And, indeed, as these writings encompassed nearly every avenue and aspect of life, it was by no means as narrow as our understanding of the word "law" would indicate. For it doubtless included something of primitive cosmology, of elementary mathematics and geography, as well as of history and poetry in addition to the primary learning of the principles and prescripts of the Law itself.

Moreover, this education in the Law was not limited to oral instruction and the memorizing of passages, although there must have been much of that. It comprehended, first of all, a knowledge of reading, not only in the current language of the time, the Aramaic, but in the ancient Hebrew. "The endeavor to educate the whole people in its religion created a unique system of universal education, whose very elements comprised not only reading and writing, but an ancient language and its classic literature," says Moore.[4]

[2]Against Apion, 2-26.
[3]Ibid. 2-19.
[4]Judaism, Vol. I, p. 332.

"The earliest instruction was in the reading and inculcation of the text of the Scripture," says Schurer, another authority. "Since in the case of written Scripture [in distinction from oral tradition] great importance was attached to its being read, elementary instruction in the Law was necessarily combined with instruction in reading. . . . A knowledge of reading must, therefore, be everywhere assumed when a somewhat more thorough knowledge of the Law existed. Hence we find even in pre-Christian times books of the Law in the possession of private individuals. On the other hand, however, the difficult art of writing was less general."[5]

The community schools were conducted in the synagogues. Apparently they were free. Moore further informs us: "Boys learned to read in the Hebrew Bible as Moslem boys today learn to read in the Koran. School copies of the Pentateuch were given them for this purpose, and by long established custom the beginning was made with the Book of Leviticus in the elementary school. . . . The reading was necessarily accompanied by an explanation in the mother tongue and the pupils thus learned the meaning of Scripture along with the words."[6]

It was doubtless in the synagogue school at Nazareth that Jesus learned not only to read but to write. It was there that he acquired a knowledge of Hebrew, and had placed within his alert mind the beginnings of that familiarity with the words and the meanings of Scripture which he was to manifest in later life. As a matter of course, the ability to read opened to him the doors of all literature in the Hebrew or the Aramaic tongue that was then within his reach. There is reason to believe that he did not confine his studies to the canonical books as he reached maturity, and that he had some contact with the apocalyptic and other Jewish literature of the time.

[5]Schurer, History of Jewish People in the Time of Christ, Div. 2, Vol. II, p. 50.

[6]Judaism, Vol. I, p. 318.

Chapter XII

SON OF THE COMMANDMENT

At the beginning of the age of adolescence every Jewish boy became what was termed a "Son of the Commandment," which meant that the personal observance of the laws required of every male then devolved upon him.[1] This coming of age, in the religious sense, at twelve or thirteen, was no doubt signalized in some way, and most frequently perhaps by an introduction to the temple services at Jerusalem. This was probably a special reason for the journey of Joseph and Mary to Jerusalem for the Passover festival when Jesus was twelve years old, which was the occasion for the only episode of the childhood of Jesus recorded in the canonical Gospels.

Luke presents the story as an illustration of the intellectual precocity of Jesus at this age, but in any case it must have been an important event in his life, not only because it marked his entry into the religious responsibilities of maturity, although physical and mental maturity were yet far away, but because it may be supposed to have been his first visit to Jerusalem, and his introduction to the impressive ceremonials of the temple, widely different from the simple services of the synagogue. Moreover, the pilgrimage itself was from first to last a festal event that was redolent with joy, abounding in change of scene and associations, inspiring in its nature and purposes, and it must have made a deep impress upon every boy who participated in it for the first time. It should be remembered that Jerusalem was more than the political capital of the nation. It was the "City of God," the holy Zion, sanctified as a whole by history, by tradition, by the benediction of the prophets, and by the hopes of the coming "day of the Lord" which centered about it. The temple, supremely important as it was as the pinnacle of the ceremonialism of the Jewish faith, was not the sole religious attraction. The city itself was an earlier Mecca, toward which the eyes of the faithful ever turned wherever they might

[1]Edersheim, Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, Vol. I, p. 235.

be. The temple was soon destroyed, but Jerusalem continued to draw its devout pilgrims, and still draws them.

As the Passover or the feast of the tabernacles drew near, every road in Palestine was crowded with the caravans of the pilgrims journeying up to Jerusalem. A common purpose at a given time, the needs of protection, and the pleasures as well as the conveniences of companionship in such a movement, made these pilgrimages usually a community rather than an individual undertaking. The pilgrims, that is to say, journeyed in companies as a rule. Within the short reaches of Palestine most of them probably walked, although there were doubtless asses or camels for the women and the baggage. It was not obligatory upon women to attend the festivals, but feminine piety and feminine curiosity were not always to be denied. From Nazareth to Jerusalem was a three days' journey "on foot." There were thus three days of companionship on the way that must have been very pleasant where the pilgrims made a congenial party. Being essentially a joyful occasion it was no doubt good humored. The trip was not without its gay diversions. It was a harvest festival they were attending and they were justified in having "a good time," which very likely became hilarious now and then. Nor was this inconsistent with the religious character of the festival. On the contrary, "Thou shalt rejoice in thy feast," said the Law. (Deut. 16:14.) There was laughter, and there was song. From time immemorial music had accompanied these periodical journeys to Jerusalem, and many of the Psalms were composed especially for the festival pilgrims—all of the Psalms that are called "songs of degrees" are of this nature. So we can imagine the company of which Joseph and Mary and Jesus were members, breaking out frequently into song as they made their way leisurely up to Zion, with perhaps the childish treble of Jesus joining in the refrain, and doubtless the accompaniment of a flute. Ye shall have "gladness of heart," says Isaiah, "as when one goeth with a pipe to come into the mountain of the LORD" (30:29). And the songs they sang were the Psalms that have heartened many a company of other lands and races in later ages. For example:

"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth" (121).

"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD. Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem" (122).

"When the LORD turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing" (126).

There were two routes from Nazareth to Jerusalem, one southward through Samaria, the other eastward across the Jordan just below its outlet from the lake (Galilee), then southward to recross the Jordan at Jericho. The former was the shorter way but the hereditary animosity of the Samaritans made it the more dangerous, and therefore the longer route was usually preferred. We do not know which way the party of Joseph went on this occasion. If, perchance, they went through Samaria, Jesus' first view of the Holy City and of the temple which crowned it was the more imposing, for it afforded a more comprehensive view, was in sight for a greater distance. Seen from this approach Josephus, to whom its every feature was familiar, thus describes the temple: "Now the outward front of the temple wanted nothing that could strike either men's minds or eyes. For it was covered all over with massive plates of gold, and reflected at the first rising of the sun a very fiery splendor, and made those who forced themselves to look upon it turn their eyes away, just as they would have done at the sun's own rays. But it appeared to strangers when they were approaching it at some distance like a mountain covered with snow, for where it was not gilt it was exceeding white."[2] If, however, they journeyed by way of Jericho they did not see Jerusalem or the temple until they were close at hand, and while the view was suddenly impressive it lacked the charm of the longer perspective.

But whatever his first sight of Zion, the emotions that surged within the breast of this remarkable child who was to become the spiritual leader of a future civilization greater and broader than

[2]Wars, Book V, Chap. 5, Sec. 6.

that of Rome must have stirred his soul as nothing else had yet done. The beauty of this magnificent edifice, its marble and gold gleaming with overpowering brilliancy, its walls as yet unstained by time, representing as it did the supreme majesty of Judaism in its ceremonial expression, and containing at its heart the mystical Holy of Holies which for ages had been believed to be the seat of Yahweh himself; the glamour that hung like a curtain over the sacred city, embodying a thousand years of the history of Yahweh's chosen people, and lastly the occasion, the Passover, the birthday anniversary of Israel, and the tens of thousands of the faithful thronging to the city, not only from Palestine but from all parts of the Roman Empire—what an event in the life of a boy, bred as was Jesus in an atmosphere of devotion to all that this sight and this occasion signified!

We are left to wonder how the hordes who flocked to Jerusalem for the Passover found lodgings. Closely confined within its Cyclopean walls its normal population must have been dense, but the feast brought visitors which sometimes, it has been conservatively estimated, numbered over a million. Doubtless most of them obtained quarters, or camped, outside the city. Whether Joseph's party stopped within or without the walls, we may be sure that the first thing they did, after they had by ablutions freed themselves from the dust of the journey, was to proceed straightway to the temple.

It was something worth seeing, for any visitor from anywhere. For the short time of its existence (it was destroyed by Titus in A.D. 70) it was one of the architectural wonders of the world. Either in magnitude or in beauty there were few, if any, buildings that surpassed it. Commenced by Herod in 20 B.C., workmen were still engaged upon some details of its construction in the days of Jesus, but its main architectural features were then complete. Unlike most temples, perhaps unlike any other, it turned all its glories inward. It was only at a distance, or from the elevations of neighboring mounts, that its magnificence was outwardly revealed. Close at hand nothing was visible but a massive wall of huge blocks of limestone so recently taken from the quarries that they were almost as white as unfinished marble. The wall was thirty-five feet in

height, thick enough to withstand a bombardment with the machines of that day, and battlemented. On each side of the quadrangle which it enclosed it was approximately one thousand feet in length, and its gates were guarded by imposing towers. It was in itself a fortress, and when its great gates were closed and locked—a nightly task which Josephus says required 200 men—it was fairly secure from any unwelcome invasion. Herod, to be sure, had cannily provided for the contingency of a priestly rebellion against his authority by constructing a strong and lofty building adjoining the temple wall at its northeast corner, which overlooked the temple area. Later the Romans called it the tower of Antonio and found it very useful.

But let us in imagination join the party of Joseph and Mary and the wide-eyed boy, Jesus, and entering endeavor to see something of what he saw. Probably they passed across the bridge over the Valley of the Cheesemongers, and entered by the Caponius gate in the western wall. It was a strange and in many respects an incomparable spectable that then burst upon the view. Herod had been compelled to conform to the ancient models in the construction of the temple proper, which was probably an adaptation of the Egyptian order of architecture, but he gave full expression to his passion for Greek art in the magnificent Grecian frame with which he surrounded the temple. The four sides of the great square, some twenty-three acres in area, were adorned with colonnades or cloisters, of monolithic Corinthian columns, as tall as the walls which they masked. These cloisters were continuous for the entire circuit of the square, unbroken save by the highly ornamental gate structures. On three sides there were two rows of columns, all of glimmering marble, but on the fourth side, the south, there were three rows, making this, "the royal porch," the broader as it was the more impressive. The columns here, also, were taller than on the other sides, so that they overtopped the outer walls, and the aisles between them were thirty-five to forty-five feet in breadth. Truly a royal porch! The colonnades were roofed with cedar and paved with mosaic, making them pleasantly shaded places to walk and talk, and ornamental benches placed at intervals invited to rest. Here were the favorite meeting places of Jerusalem, here

men gathered for group discussions, here teachers and preachers found interested listeners. Here met and mingled and gossiped, and perhaps conspired, not only the Jews of Jerusalem, but Jews from all parts of the empire; and not only the Jews but the Gentiles, for all that part of the square not devoted specifically to the temple uses was open to anyone who wished to enter, and for this reason was known as the Court of the Gentiles. This in itself is evidence that the religious and social exclusiveness of the Jews was not as rigid as is commonly supposed. When we recall the fact that the Mohammedans would not permit anyone not of the faith even to enter the city of Mecca on pain of death, it is to be seen that the Jews were relatively extremely tolerant. Not only were the people of any race or faith allowed to enter Jerusalem, but the precincts of the temple were freely open to them. They could not, to be sure, intrude upon the courts and sacred places reserved for the Jews, but that was the sole prohibition. Moreover, the mere fact that this great outer space within the walls of the temple area was known as the Court of the Gentiles implies not only the customary presence of Gentiles there but more or less association with the Jews there, and if there also elsewhere.

But we have left Joseph and Mary and the boy Jesus coming into the Court of the Gentiles from the Caponius gate. Of course, they saw at the first sweep of their vision almost all that it has taken so many words here to describe. But they saw also a vast assembly of human beings in this great court in which over 200,000 people were often congregated—Jews from everywhere in the varied costumes of the time; representatives of many races who were not Jews; rich and poor, whining beggars and haughty priestly aristocrats; scribes and Pharisees, traders and artisans and shepherds, a seething mass of human beings, most of them here for worship in accordance with the mandate of the Law, but many for purely secular purposes that were often wholly mercenary. Here were stalls for the sale of lambs and other animals for sacrificial offerings, here could be bought pigeons and turtle doves for similar ends, and here were the stands of the money changers busily engaged in exchanging the coins of many lands for the particular money that only would be accepted at the temple treasury. All

this gave the Court of the Gentiles the bustle and the noise of a market place, and it was such a scene that in later years aroused the violent indignation of Jesus, but which now had for him all the interest of exciting novelty.

More important than all else they saw what was the chief object of their attendance, the temple itself, a splendid edifice of marble and gold, with its enormous bronze gates and its lofty pylons glittering in the brilliant sun of Judea. Doubtless they strolled for awhile through the crowds in the Corinthian colonnades before turning their steps upward to the temple, which stood upon a terraced elevation, which placed its base somewhat above the level of the Court of the Gentiles. The entire structure was surrounded, at some distance, by a stone balustrade, bearing at intervals inscriptions giving warning that death would be the certain portion of anyone but a Jew or a convert to Judaism to venture beyond this barrier. It was called the "soreg," and the Roman overlords saw to it that this prohibition was strictly enforced. It was no bar, however, to our visitors, and they passed through its openings and up to the great bronze gate of Nicanor, which was the main entrance to the strong walls some thirty-five feet in height which surrounded the sacred enclosure. In Acts (3:2) this is called the gate Beautiful.

Passing through this they entered the Court of the Women, so called not because it was reserved exclusively for women but because here alone within the enclosure of the temple proper women were permitted to come. As a matter of fact, this was the principal place of assembly for the Jewish worshipers, women and men, and comparatively few went beyond this court, unless they had brought animals for private sacrifice; for the court beyond, reached through the Court of the Women, and known as the Court of the Men of Israel, was used largely by the priests for the purposes of sacrifice, and the worshipers therein had but a narrow space, relative to the whole, in which to stand.

However, those in the Court of the Women could see into this court through the great two-leaved gate which stood open during the hours of sacrifice, and the enormous altar of burnt-offering was plainly visible as well as the movements of the priests in attendance

about it. This altar was made of unhewn stones, "which no tool had ever touched" in their shaping, stones, that is to say, that were shaped by nature. It was fifty cubits square (about 90 feet), according to Josephus, and it rose to a height of fifteen cubits. At the north side was a ramp by which the priests carried the materials for sacrifice to the top, where a fire was kept burning continuously day and night, never being permitted to go out for even a single moment. Both the courts were without roofs and all the ceremonies of sacrifice, except the incense offerings, were conducted in the open air.

On the north side of the Court of the Men of Israel, and back of the altar of burnt-offering, was the curtained entrance to "the holy house," the center and chief of the entire system of temple structures. Upon this lofty building, 180 feet in height, Josephus calculates, was lavished all the decorative art the Jewish law and tradition permitted, and it was its burning golden walls that dazzled the eyes at a distance. It contained, however, but two apartments, one "the holy place," which only the officiating priests were permitted to enter. Here were the altar of incense, the seven-branched candlestick and the table of shew bread, sacred to this sanctuary for ages. The other and smaller chamber contained no furniture and was unlighted. This was the Holy of Holies, the inner sanctuary of Deity. None but the High Priest could enter here, and he only once a year on the Day of Atonement.

Twice daily, sacrifices for the people at large were offered on the great altar, in the morning at sunrise and in the afternoon about three o'clock. These two were, of course, the chief offerings, but in between them the priests were kept busy with the innumerable private offerings of individuals or groups which were daily presented. The public offerings were occasions for elaborate ceremony with numerous white-robed priests in attendance, each with a definite task to perform. Ordinarily it was a lamb that was sacrificed as the burnt-offering, although on festival occasions it was a young bullock. The burnt-offering was accompanied by a meat-offering, or meal-offering, which was not of animal flesh, but a cake of specially prepared unleavened bread; and by a drink-offering of wine. These were all placed on the altar by the officiating

priests. While the offerings were being presented the Levite musicians sang certain Psalms accompanied by musical instruments, the congregation joining at fixed intervals with definite responses such as "Hallelujah," or "His mercy endureth forever." The measures were marked and emphasized with the clash of cymbals, and at the pauses in the music priests detailed for that purpose sounded a blast from the trumpets at which the worshipers prostrated themselves.[3]

It was such a ceremony as this which the boy Jesus saw and in which he, no doubt, participated. Luke, however, takes all this for granted and tells us nothing about it. He is recording an episode in which the temple is but a scene. Jesus obviously was interested in more than the architecture, and more than the picturesque and imposing ceremonies of worship. His inquiring mind wanted to know what it was all about, and we gather from the narrative that he desired an opportunity to have speech with the grave and reverend scholars about the temple who might satisfy his thirst for information, but that no such opportunity presented itself while the wishes of Joseph and Mary and all the rest of the party governed his time and his movements. So we may suppose that when they started out from Jerusalem on their return journey he daringly dropped out of the caravan, re-entered the city and made his way to the temple. There the distracted Joseph and Mary found him three days later, earnestly engaged in conversation with a group of the learned "doctors," or teachers, "both hearing them and asking them questions." And we are told by Luke that "all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers."

The only inference necessary to draw from this episode is that Jesus was an exceptionally bright child, who had already learned much from his studies and wanted to learn more, who was beginning to do his own thinking, and who perhaps felt within himself the first vague promptings toward his subsequent career. This is apparently what, and all, Luke meant to imply. There is no suggestion of the supernatural in the story. Nor was the incident

[3]This description of the temple and the temple worship is drawn from Josephus, Schurer's "The Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ," and The Jewish Encyclopedia.

unique. "When I was a child," says Josephus, "and about fourteen years of age, I was commended by all for the love I had to learning, on which account the high priests and the principal men of the city came then frequently to me together, in order to know my opinion about the accurate understanding of points of the law."[4]

That Joseph and Mary should have gone a day's journey from Jerusalem before they missed Jesus is hard for the Occidental to understand, but it presents no difficulties to the Oriental accustomed to such pilgrimages. Dr. Abraham Rihbany, who was "born not far from where the Master was born, and was brought up under almost the identical conditions under which he lived," says he went with his parents on two pilgrimages before he was fifteen. "The whole mystery," he tells us, "is cleared up in the saying 'and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance.' Kinsfolk and acquaintance travel in large groups, and the young pilgrims, such as the twelve-year-old Jesus, are considered safe as long as they keep in close touch with the company. On such journeys parents may not see their sons for hours at a time."[5]

However that may have been, the incident ended happily, and Luke says with finality that "he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them," a dutiful and obedient son.

[4]Life, p. 1.
[5]Rihbany, The Syrian Christ, p. 45.

Chapter XIII

THE MIDDLE YEARS

It is supposed, and with good reason, that the activities of Jesus from his early youth until he began his ministry at the age of 30 centered in the carpenter shop and the tasks of the carpenter within the town of Nazareth. Joseph was a carpenter.. The acquirement of a trade by every Jewish boy was regarded as almost if not quite a religious duty, and because the son became early the helper of the father, it naturally followed that usually he adopted the father's trade. At any rate the Gospels make it clear that the people of Nazareth knew Jesus as a carpenter. "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us?"[1] they asked years later when he made his appearance there as a teacher and leader of men.

Apparently at that time Joseph was dead, and there is nothing in the records to indicate how long he survived after that memorable visit to Jerusalem when Jesus was twelve. He may have lived until Jesus was well into manhood, and it is quite probable that he lived at least long enough to see Jesus become a skilled workman, and able to take upon his shoulders, as the eldest, the responsibility of providing for the family that Joseph left behind him. However that may be it was as a carpenter, and seemingly only as a carpenter, that Jesus was known to his fellow-townsmen of Nazareth. If it may be assumed that Jesus began to give real aid to Joseph in his work as an artisan when he was thirteen or fourteen, and gradually became what is technically termed a journeyman carpenter, it then becomes a reasonable presumption that he was occupied as a carpenter through the succeeding years until he entered upon his real mission at thirty. If during all these years he made no impress upon his neighbors of Nazareth as a teacher or as a man of extraordinary spiritual powers, as seems to have been the case, it appears obvious that he must have been regarded as a quiet, unassuming

[1]Mark 6:3.

workman, engrossed in his occupation, orthodox in his conduct, seeking to attract no particular attention to himself, albeit they could hardly have failed to notice that he was a young man of unusual intelligence.

In the absence of any information we are obliged to depend upon conjecture as to his character and conduct in these obscure years of his life, but we know enough of the nature of this remarkable personality after he burst like a comet into the view of the men of his race, to warrant the conviction that the previous years were not spent in concentration upon the details of his trade, but were devoted largely to thought and study and observation, consciously preparing himself, or unconsciously being prepared, for the work he was to do. That was a preparation that need not have interfered with his daily tasks, that need not have aroused more than a casual interest among his kin and his acquaintances, for it was an inner preparation of the mind and the soul that required no outward manifestation of the process. It is difficult to account for the astonishment of Nazareth at his sudden rise to fame unless he was a man who in those years talked little, but who thought deeply and broadly upon the subjects that had always attracted the interest of his race and that were then engrossing its attention as never before; who sought in his leisure hours to draw from the sacred and other writings that were accessible to him an understanding of the meaning of life and its relation to the nature and the purposes of Deity. For obviously when he came into public view he had already arrived at definite and profound conclusions as to these matters, and was fully prepared for the great task that lay before him. And it is no less obvious that these conclusions, differing materially as they did in some respects from the accepted opinions of the teachers of his day, must have been arrived at by independent thinking, in constant and conscious contact with the supreme source of spiritual wisdom.

So we may be justified in believing that his years as a carpenter were the years of building in a double sense—that while he was building the material things that are the products of the carpenter's skill he was engaged in building that marvelous character, that unique personality, and that incomparable religious system which

he later revealed to the world. But these were not years of ascetic seclusion. His work carried him into daily association with the life of his neighborhood, and possibly farther afield. He must have been cognizant of all that went on about him. He must have seen with clear eyes the difficulties under which men labor in the pursuits of life and the attainment of righteousness, and himself have shared in these difficulties. He must have discerned as no other has done the qualities that made them weak or strong, and perceived, notwithstanding their defects, the inherent divinity that lay within them. For it is plain that his conception of the value of human personality set a new standard for human society, as well as a new standard for religion. This conception was full formed when he began his ministry, and therefore must have grown out of his observations, his thoughts, his studies and his communions with Deity during the unknown years when he labored as a carpenter at Nazareth. It is a point of the greatest significance that the personality of Jesus, his views of life and of human relations, and the religion he taught and exemplified were developed at the workbench, that all were shaped in no small degree by the influences of manual labor and the intimate contacts with the common run of mankind.

Nevertheless they were developed in the soil of Judaism. The background, the atmosphere, the teachings and the faith of Israel entered into the personality of Jesus, and nowhere else could such a man with such a religion and such a mission have been produced. The background has been discussed at some length in previous chapters. To us it is necessarily something very remote, but to Jesus it was a living presence.

One of his habits, revealed in the records, was his frequent withdrawal to some quiet spot for meditation and prayer. Doubtless this habit, as do most habits, developed in his youth, and if so must have contributed immeasurably to his spiritual growth. Doubtless, too, he occasionally sought the summits of the surrounding hills, where the free airs of heaven could play about him and where the horizons were broader and unimpeded, for such contemplation. And here he had before him, in a physical sense, the background of Israel; here within plain view from these heights were the scenes of

many of the incidents which had made their impress upon the race, and upon the peculiar religion which made it unique among the peoples of the world; here, so to speak, was a map of its history and a chart of its spiritual development.

In and about these hills in the early days dwelt the tribe or clan of Zebulon with those of Naphthali and Issachar as immediate neighbors, and these northern clans were the salvation of Israel in a number of crises. "Zebulon and Naphthali were a people that jeoparded their lives unto the death in the high places," sang Deborah exultantly after that victory in which, she said, "the stars in their courses fought against Sisera." Sitting upon a height above Nazareth the entire scene of the drama described in the fourth and fifth chapters of Judges was before his eyes. Here, too, he could pick out every incident of the triumph of Gideon over the Midianites. The valley of Esdraelon or Jezreel, virtually the whole length and breadth of which was visible to him, was, indeed, the scene of great events in the history of Israel down to his own time. Over there, just across the valley, on Mount Gilboa, he could see the place where Saul and Jonathan fell in that last great battle against the Philistines, and a little to the westward was the spot where the good King Josiah was slain by the Egyptians and by his untimely death hastened the downfall of Judah. If he felt inclined to reflect upon the follies of his race and upon its frequent and always disastrous disloyalty to God, he could look over to the height where once was the capital of Ahab with its "ivory house" in which the unspeakable Jezebel reigned supreme—Ahab, whose iniquities under the influence of Jezebel brought Elijah, the first of the great prophets and the traditional forerunner of the Messiah, into vigorous action as the messenger of Yahweh. Turning to the westward he could see upon Mount Carmel the place where Elijah brought down destruction from on high upon the priests of Baal, and looking eastward again could vision the home of Elisha at Shunem. And, finally, along that ancient highway that lay just below him had marched the armies of Shalmaneser to encompass the destruction of the Kingdom of Northern Israel and the dispersion of its leading inhabitants.

But the history within his view was not confined to the elder days of Israel. The restoration of the ancient political independence and territorial sway under the Maccabees was too recent an event and too appealing to the passionate patriotism of the Jews to be soon forgotten. No doubt it was made all the more vivid in their recollection by the present subjection to Rome. And Jesus, whatever his political views, could hardly have been insensible to the feelings which so deeply stirred his people. At any rate the scenes of many events in the Maccabean revolution were here before his eyes, and he could not have been unconscious of the fact that it was this uprising in defense of the faith that restored Galilee, his homeland, to its ancient place in the territory of Israel. Moreover, there can be no doubt that from these heights about Nazareth he himself had seen history in the making. It was among the free highlanders of Galilee that the spirit of Jewish nationalism was most active. The proximity of the city of Sepphoris has been mentioned. It was, indeed, less than four miles away and could be plainly seen from the crest of the hills on the north side of Nazareth. It was in Sepphoris that Judas the Galilean inaugurated a revolt against the Romans, plundering the armory there and arming his numerous followers. Nazareth so close at hand must have been tremendously interested in that insurrection, if some of its people were not directly involved in it. This occurred only about a year before that pilgrimage to Jerusalem when Jesus was twelve years old; and when the legions of Varus swept across Galilee and suppressed the revolt, burning Sepphoris and punishing many of its inhabitants with slavery, it is highly probable that the boy Jesus was among those of Nazareth who viewed this appalling tragedy from the shelter of the neighboring hilltops. Moreover, it is quite likely that when Varus, after the rebellion had been overcome, crucified 2,000 of those most guilty, many of the crosses were set up within sight of Nazareth, and some of its people may have suffered thereon, possibly some of the kinfolk of Jesus himself.

Jesus, therefore, was brought up with the past and the present before his eyes. He must have been as familiar with the vicissitudes of his race as with its spiritual triumphs. He knew the follies of its kings and its later political leaders as well as he knew the righteous

principles of its prophets. And he was as well acquainted with the political conditions of his time and the current vision of his people as he was with the precepts of the Law. It could not have been otherwise with a man of his intelligence and keen insight. While the spiritual obviously predominated in his nature and in his thought, it is no less obvious that he saw what was going on about him with clear eyes and with practical appraisement. He had his visions, to be sure, as every man of great accomplishment in the world's advancement has had, but they were related to the realities of life. While in the succeeding years he was to build for all time it was upon the foundation of his own background and environment, and the circumstances and conditions of his own day.

But Jesus, we may be sure, did not seek the seclusion of the hilltops so much for the contemplation of history or of contemporaneous conditions as for communion with God in prayer. As we have seen, the habit of prayer was instilled into every Jewish child at a very early age, but the prayers so learned were formal utterances, identical for all, and repeated at certain hours on certain occasions. They required no exercise of thought or of feeling. They might inspire both or either, but it is safe to say that as a rule their repetition was mechanical, uttered in conformity with law and custom, and were of little spiritual value save as they served—and this, to be sure, was important—to keep recognition of, and loyalty to, God constant in the heart of the Jew. However Jesus may have conformed to the ritualistic requirements of prayer, it is certain that it was not for this that he so frequently retired to a solitary place. He sought a quiet spot where he could have undisturbed and intimate contact with Deity, where his thoughts could have free expression and where his mind could be open and receptive to divine impression. The recorded incidents leave no doubt that with him prayer was not a formula but a real and exceedingly close communion from which he drew strength, courage, light, and wisdom.

It is quite probable that he was very early in life imbued with the idea that he had a mission to perform in the service of God. There is no direct evidence of this in the Gospels, apart from his words in the temple on that visit in his childhood—"Wist ye not

that I must be about my Father's business?"[2]—which in itself would be slight foundation for such an assumption. But there is lacking any indication of surprise when finally he feels called upon to devote himself at once to a peculiar and all-absorbing service, and to take upon himself a position of extraordinary public leadership, which seems to justify the belief that the call had been expected, perhaps long expected, and that he was prepared for it. It is a common assumption that the consciousness of Jesus burst suddenly into full bloom at the time of his baptism, that then he was somehow transformed from a Galilean carpenter into a supreme religious leader, that there was nothing in his life back of this moment, save his birth, that materially mattered. There is nothing in the Gospels to warrant this assumption except the fact that all of them make this event the beginning of his public career. It was to his brief public career that the Gospel narratives were exclusively devoted, and properly so. It was not biography in the modern sense that engaged the attention of their writers but the recording of the public words and acts of the Master that had a direct bearing upon the religion they were undertaking to advance. Unquestionably the baptism marked the beginning of the public mission of Jesus, and they did not find it necessary for their purposes to go behind this event. But they do not claim or suggest that there was any miraculous metamorphosis. Clearly they regarded the man who went down from Nazareth to the Jordan as the same man who came out of the Jordan after his baptism, save that there and then he had been dedicated to the service he was henceforward to render.

It seems, therefore, more reasonable to assume that this event was the culmination of the long preparation for his task, that in the thirty obscure years preceding this he had been slowly shaped and fitted for the great work he was to do; that he had anticipated the call, realized what it might involve, and was spiritually, mentally, and physically ready for it. "There is every indication, I think," says Rufus M. Jones, "that the calm, balanced life, with its immense inward depth, rests back upon a long period of slow formation, and that the unfathomable wisdom revealed in even the sim-

[2]Luke 2:49.

plest and most casual words he spoke springs out of years of experience and insight which had been shaping during the hidden Galilean years."[3]

But there must have been more than the ordinary experience of man in those years, more than the developing processes of study and thought and observation. And there must have been more than the influences of heredity and environment in the shaping of his incomparable personality, important and essential as these influences were. There seems to be no satisfactory way of accounting for the uniqueness of Jesus among the outstanding figures of human history save in the assumption of a unique experience in relation to God. Jesus had spiritual qualities that made him pre-eminent among men, and he manifested a spiritual authority that set him forever apart. From whence did this come? Not, we must concede, from normal human experience, but from a peculiar experience with Deity that must have been in progress through these years of obscurity.

It is a fact of the utmost significance that the three great religions of the modern world—Christianity, Judaism, and Islamism—had their sources in the Semitic race, and chiefly in its Jewish branch. This is no mere coincidence. That race from the earliest ages seems to have manifested a peculiar genius for religion, which was the outcome of a peculiar receptiveness to spiritual impressions which were regarded as, and in many instances no doubt were, emanations from Deity. "The Semite believed as no other race believed that a man may be so God-inspired that his message is the absolute articulation of the divine, the interpretation of the present and the unveiling of the future. The prophet thus became the supreme expression of his religious genius—the voice of religious certainty charged with ethical passion. His nature fitted him for this commanding form of expression. Some element of strange brooding lay at the heart of it, some rare sensitiveness that objectified the strongly felt, some courage to say 'Thus saith the Lord,' some unique bequest, a consuming passion for righteousness. And he had a gift of noble eloquence and a power to make a song of a vision. So he moved the world."[4]

[3]Pathways to the Reality of God, p. 129.
[4]Atkins, Procession of the Gods, p. 406.

It was this which made the prophets of Israel, and the writers of the greatest of the Psalms, pre-eminent in the expression of religious principles and ideals that still tremendously influence the reason as well as the highest emotion of the world. And it was this receptiveness to divine impressions, this profound conviction of divine direction, this complete subjection to the will of God, so manifested, this passion for righteousness, raised to the highest degree, which inspired Jesus with his great mission, which enabled him to speak with the voice of divine authority, and which made him the supreme religious leader of all time. And this he acquired by his frequent and intimate communion with God, to which the records show he was accustomed, and from which he invariably drew new strength and new spirit. It is difficult to believe that this communion had its beginning when he retired to the wilderness after his baptism. Rather does it seem that it must have been a lifelong habit, which had a large part in the development of his personality, and in the preparation for his task.

Chapter XIV

JOHN THE BAPTIST

Did Jesus recognize the call when it came? One can but wonder. It was from far away. It was in no sense personal. A strange man had appeared in the wilderness of Judea crying, "Repent ye, for the Kingdom of God is at hand." It was a cry that stirred the hearts and kindled the hopes of the Jews as no other could have done. It required no explanation. They knew in a general way what it meant. The long promised, long anticipated, "day of the Lord" was being proclaimed by this gaunt, austere, uncouth figure who had suddenly emerged from the desert with a tongue of flame, and with the appearance and air and commanding manner of that prophet of old who it had been foretold would herald the dawn of the kingdom. Had not Yahweh said, by the mouth of the prophet Malachi, four centuries before, "Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord," and here was one who looked and acted as tradition had taught them Elijah had looked and acted.

And this man John, with his reverberating cry, appeared at a moment when expectancy had been raised to a high pitch by the current belief that the time had arrived for the coming of the kingdom and the advent of the Messiah. This belief was based upon abstruse calculations, drawn from scriptural writings (the Book of Daniel in particular) which were supposed to show that the year 5000 of the creation calendar then accepted by the Jews would usher in the promised day of the Lord, and the appearance of John coincided with these calculations. This calendar was quite different from the Jewish creation calendar adopted some centuries later and must have been greatly deficient in definiteness, but apparently it brought the 5000 years since the creation to an end in this period. That this was the common understanding of the time is indicated by Josephus in his statement, in the opening paragraph of his book, *Against Apion,* that his work, "Antiquities of the Jews," "contains the history of 5000 years."

Rabbi Silver, in his scholarly book, *Messianic Speculation in Israel,* has thrown new light upon the beliefs and emotions of this period by revealing the nature of the current calculations and the conclusions drawn therefrom. "The messianic hopes were rife in Israel at this time," he says, "not only because the people were suffering under Roman oppression but also because their chronology led them to believe that they were on the threshold of the Millennium.... The Rabbis generally believed, on the basis of the Biblical creation week, that 'the world will last 6000 years and will be in chaos 1000 years' (San. 97a). The thousand years prior to the destruction of the world (5000-6000) would be the years of consummation and universal blessedness."[1] And they believed they were very near the year 5000. It seems likely, he says, that "in the minds of the people the Millennium was to begin around the year 30" of the Christian Era, and he makes this illuminating statement: "When Jesus came into Galilee 'spreading the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, and saying the time is fulfilled and the Kingdom of God is at hand' he was voicing the opinion universally held that the year 5000 in the creation calendar which is to usher in the Sixth Millennium—the age of the Kingdom of God—was at hand."[2]

If this is true it is easy to understand the sensation that was unquestionably made by the appearance and the message of John. He began preaching in the wilderness of Judea, that desolate country along the west coast of the Dead Sea, and so far as we can learn he confined his activities to that region and the banks of the Jordan near the Dead Sea. Once only is he reported farther up the river than the neighborhood of Jericho (John 3:23), and never does he seem to have entered the centers of population. Yet he drew multitudes from Jerusalem and Judea, and from still farther away, into the forbidding and uncomfortable wilderness country to hear him, and all, say the Gospel writers, were baptized by him. Josephus also testifies to the impression made by this man, saying they "came in crowds about him" and were "greatly moved by hearing his words."[3]

[1]Silver, Messianic Speculation in Israel, p. 16.
[2]Ibid., p. 6.
[3]Antiq. Book XVIII, Chap. 5, Sec. 2.

The Gospel writers are mainly concerned with their conviction that John was the predestined forerunner or precursor of Jesus, and it is wholly in that light that they present him. But he was something more than a herald. He was evidently a remarkable man in himself, an extraordinary character of force and power, and his influence upon the time was far-reaching. He did not seek popular approval. He did not bow to the mighty. On the contrary, he condemned unrighteousness wherever it might be found and in the scathing terms that marked the prophets of old. One can imagine the crowds that descended the precipitous Jericho road from Jerusalem to the ford on the Jordan, where John was preaching and baptizing, filled with wonder and fear and awe at the electrical announcement of this strange figure from the desert—"the Kingdom of God is at hand." Nothing less than this could have taken the purse-proud, self-righteous and complacent dignitaries of Zion out of their comfortable quarters and down into the blazing sunshine of the desert to see and hear this man who claimed to be a messenger of God. And nothing less could have caused the multitudes of the common people to swarm about him in those barren solitudes wherein he held forth. To most of them his declaration meant that a political revolution was impending which implied the overthrow of Roman power and at least the restoration of the independence of Israel. That was the popular interpretation of the Kingdom of God, for the more spiritual conceptions of that mystical phrase were beyond the understanding or the appreciation of the vast majority. What they looked for and passionately hoped for was a renewal of the material glories of the days of David and Solomon. How this was to be accomplished they had no idea, but they believed firmly that somehow God would do it, aided by that particular vicegerent of Deity whom in anticipation they termed the Messiah, one of the line of David who was to be an invincible military commander. The conception of the Kingdom, as we have previously shown, took various forms, but this was the prevailing notion.

John's idea of the kingdom is but vaguely revealed in the few words attributed to him that have come down to us. There was in them, however, no suggestion of political action, political independence or political supremacy, whatever may have been his opinion as to those aspects of the question. He seemed, indeed, to regard

his task and mission as preliminary, preparatory, and essentially religious. He represented himself as being he of whom the prophet Isaiah had spoken saying, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." Accordingly he preached repentance and baptism—repentance in preparation for the divine judgment, which was associated with every conception of the kingdom, and baptism, for, as the Gospels put it, "the remission of sins." By repentance and baptism John evidently believed and taught that the individual was made ready for the coming judgment. Of the nature of the kingdom, or of the means by which it was to be established, he seems to have had nothing to say. But the judgment which he visioned was in accord with scriptural and apocalyptic writings. And the Messiah which he anticipated was primarily the agency or administrator of divine judgment. "One that cometh after me shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire instead of with water," he said, and with the imagery characteristic of the prophets of old he described him as one "whose fan [for the winnowing of wheat] is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his [threshing] floor, and gather his wheat into the garner, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."[4] This sounds like an echo of the words of Malachi: "For behold the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings."[5]

In short, John was concerned wholly with the moral reformation that was the essential preparation for judgment. And the first step in this preparation was repentance. In this, too, he was in accord with the recorded traditions of his race; the idea of repentance as a means of obtaining God's favor runs through the Scriptures from beginning to end. Repentance was the theme of all the prophets. "Turn ye from your evil ways and unto the LORD thy God, who is merciful," was their constant cry. And John with the vision of the impending judgment before his eyes preached repentance as the indispensable prerequisite of divine forgiveness and salvation.

[4] Matt. 3:10.
[5] Malachi 4:1, 2.

But John associated with repentance a rite which was unknown to the prophets. Baptism was not a new thing to the Jews of this later day. It was, indeed, part of the prescribed ceremonial for the formal reception of converts to the faith of Judaism, and was therefore more or less familiar to the people. But John seems to have given it a new and far wider application. In the reception of Gentile proselytes to the faith of Judaism, baptism was a ceremonial washing signifying purification from the errors of idolatry and consecration to life under the Law. John gave the rite a larger field and a deeper significance by extending it to the Jews themselves and making it the outward sign of preparation for, and consecration to, life under the kingdom. Yet in this as in the other it was the symbol of cleansing, and apparently the Jews needed no explanation of its meaning. At any rate no explanation is offered in the Gospels. Josephus says that John "was a good man and commanded the Jews to exercise virtue, both as to righteousness toward one another and piety toward God, and so to come to baptism; for that the washing (with water) would be acceptable to him, if they made use of it, not in order to the putting away of some sins but for the purification of the body; supposing still that the soul was thoroughly purified beforehand by righteousness."[6] Josephus, of course, was speaking to the pagan readers for whom his book was written and to whom the rite was unfamiliar, although some of the mystery religions had ceremonies of somewhat similar symbolism. He was therefore at pains to explain that baptism was regarded by John as having efficacy only when it followed an inward purification; that in itself it was not an agency in the removal of sin but a sign of a new status after repentance and reformation had been affirmed. The Gospels say simply that John "preached the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins,"[7] a statement which permits, and has had, various interpretations, but while it seems to be at variance with that of Josephus it is quite possible that in the minds of the Gospel writers it meant pretty much the same thing. Whatever its significance in the ministry of John it is clear that he made it an essential rite and great numbers of those who heard him accepted it as such and were baptized.

[6]Antiq. Book XVIII, Chap. 5, Sec. 2.
[7]Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3.

Chapter XV

BAPTISM AND TEMPTATION

News of a sensational nature must have traveled rapidly in the dense and closely knit population of Palestine, and the news of the appearance of John with his startling proclamation must have circulated with something approaching the speed of telegraphic transmission. There can be little doubt that it reached Nazareth quickly, and there as elsewhere awakened an intense interest in John and his message. To the young carpenter, Jesus, it was the call to a new life, to a great mission, though he may not at once have recognized it as such. What we know is that it struck such a responsive chord in his heart that he laid aside his tools and made his way to the place where John was then preaching.

Where that was is a matter of some doubt. John says it was at Bethabara, but the location of Bethabara is disputed by the authorities, some contending that it was opposite Jericho and others that it was farther north, in the neighborhood of Scythopolis. It is a matter of small importance. At one of the fords on the Jordan John was baptizing, and wherever it was Jesus sought and found him there.

What were the thoughts of this young man from Galilee as he observed the strange figure before him and listened to his words? To this there can be no answer. But it is evident that he was profoundly impressed by the tremendous importance of his announcement, by his appearance and manner, so like to the recorded description of Elijah, by the earnestness of his burning eloquence, and by the sincerity of the religious purposes which obviously motivated his conduct. Afterward, when he was fully embarked in his own mission, he expressed this opinion of John: "Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of woman there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist."[1] No

[1]Matt. 11:11.

higher praise could be given to any man, and it was undoubtedly based upon the impression made by John upon his mind and heart at his first, and apparently his only, meeting with him.

Again, in his last days he asked of the chief priests and the scribes in the temple area, "the baptism of John, was it from heaven or of men?" Very likely he asked himself that question as he stood on the bank of the Jordan and listened to the ringing words of John. And he must have been convinced that it was from heaven, for he presented himself to John and was baptized by him.

Few events in the world's history have been of such importance as the baptism of Jesus. All authorities are agreed that it marked the beginning of his public career. It was at once the culmination of his years of growth and preparation and the doorway to that cosmic life for which he had been made ready. Here he abandoned all he had left behind at Nazareth, home and family and kin, and the work which until now had been his daily task, and set out upon the road that was to lead to the cross and to eternal glory. Here he received a definite call to service which he recognized as from God, and here he was divinely consecrated to that service.

What happened that day on the Jordan is told by the writers of the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) in similar and almost identical language. Mark, the earliest of these writers, says: "And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him: And there came a voice from heaven saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."[2] Luke thus describes the incident: "Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased."[3] Matthew says: "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened

[2]Mark 1:10, 11.
[3]Luke 3:21, 22.

unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."[4]

It is to be noticed that Mark and Matthew agree in the statement that it was Jesus who saw this, and apparently Jesus alone. Luke is not explicit about this but his words bear the same interpretation. It was not a public spectacle. It was a manifestation of divine approval and appointment to the one whom it directly concerned and not to others. The Gospel of John, to be sure, quotes John the Baptist as saying that he (John) "saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove and it abode upon him."[5] but the earlier and historically the more trustworthy writers report no witness to it other than Jesus.

Something appeared to his inner vision, a voice spoke to his inner mind. Undoubtedly he regarded it as an authentic revelation of God's favor and will, and presumedly he disclosed this experience to his disciples at some later time for otherwise it would not have been known to anyone but himself. To the Jew there was nothing incredible in such a divine manifestation as this, even if it were represented as something seen by the physical eye and heard as a physical voice. Their Scriptures contained numerous instances of the appearance of God or the Spirit of God in some form or other, and of his speaking directly to persons chosen by him to do his work. He had appeared, or had spoken, or both, to Abraham and Moses, again and again. All the prophets spoke, as they believed, according to God's express direction. "Thus saith the Lord" was the refrain of all of them from Amos to Malachi. Nor was the idea of what is termed the Spirit of God unknown to the Jews of that day. "And the Spirit of the LORD fell upon me and said unto me,"[6] Ezekiel had declared, and Zechariah had spoken of "the words which the LORD of hosts hath sent in his spirit by the former prophets."[7]

Jesus therefore was convinced that he had been divinely singled out and consecrated for God's work, and if we measure the evi-

[4]Matt. 3:16, 17.
[5]John 1:32.
[6]11:5.
[7]7:12.

dences of this manifestation by the consequences of his conviction he was not mistaken. But this specific manifestation of divine appointment carried with it such vast implications that he at once withdrew into the wilderness to think it out. Paul later under somewhat similar circumstances did much the same thing. Going down to Damascus he suddenly saw a great light and heard a voice, as he afterward described it,[8] an incident which determined his future career. But before he began his great work he went, he says, into Arabia, possibly not far from the scene of the retirement of Jesus, "conferring not with flesh and blood,"[9] to make up his mind as to his course. Paul, however, was faced with a complete and radical change not only in his activities, but in the bases of his thoughts, his outlook upon life and upon the world, and in all of his customary associations, and he seems to have spent several years in secluded meditation before he set out upon his new career. Not so with Jesus. The revelation that had come to him was the culmination and the crown of the thoughts and the devotions of his lifetime. All the preceding years had been but preparation for this, and he was ready. Nevertheless, there were some things to be determined before he finally embarked upon his mission which required a period of contemplation, of prayer, of soul-searching self-examination, of perhaps more prolonged and intimate communion with God than he had ever known before.

What is described in the Gospels as the temptation of Jesus was doubtless his figurative description, given later to his disciples, of his efforts to adjust himself to the new situation and to determine the general direction of his course in the life he was now to enter upon. He felt that he had been called the Son of God by God himself. What did this signify? Could it be that he was the Messiah which all men of his race had long expected? Perhaps the thought had entered his mind before. He was of the line of David, and any one of that line might entertain such notions. Beyond doubt he had given much thought and study to the messianic problem and was familiar with the Scriptures

[8] Acts 22:6, 7.
[9] Gal. 1:16-18.

pertaining, or supposed to pertain, to the promised Messiah, as well as with some, at least, of the apocalyptic references. Perhaps, on the other hand, it was a new idea as it related to himself. Now, however, there was much more than a suggestion of such a superlative distinction in the title given to him by the divine voice.

"Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," it said to him. This meant more to him than an expression of affection and approval from on high. It meant that he had been declared the Son of God by God himself, and this in turn must have meant to him that he was the Chosen Messiah, the Anointed One, for that seems to have been the current implication of the title when expressed by the Deity. "It is he, the Messiah," says an eminent Jewish authority, "who is spoken of in the Psalms [2:7]: 'Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.' In Jesus' time it was never doubted that these words referred to the Messiah, for earlier the Psalm says: 'All the rulers took counsel together against the LORD, against his anointed.' "[10] Moreover, another Jewish authority says "the phrase, 'the only begotten Son' (John 3:16) is merely another rendering for 'beloved Son.' The Septuagint translates 'thine only Son' of Gen. 22:2 by 'thy beloved Son.' "[11] Therefore, the term "beloved Son" heard by Jesus was but a variant of the "Begotten Son" referred to in the second Psalm which at the time had a distinct messianic significance. These considerations warrant the conclusion that Jesus was there and then convinced that he was the appointed and anointed Messiah, and it was not a conviction that gradually grew upon him in the course of his mission.

But if the title given to him by the voice conveyed this appointment, what did it imply? It meant obviously that he had been called to a position of pre-eminent service, but what was to be the nature and the direction of that service? As the Messiah all sorts of possibilities presented themselves to his imagination. It was here, conceivably, that various temptations confronted him. That his call related in some way to the coming of the Kingdom

[10]Klausner, Jesus of Nazareth, p. 378.
[11]Emil G. Hirsch in Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. II, p. 461.

of God he could hardly have doubted, being what he was, and believing as John believed that the coming of the kingdom was at hand. But was it to be a material kingdom as most of his race expected, or a spiritual kingdom? If the former, there lay before him possibilities of great physical power and material glory. If the latter, his rôle was spiritual leadership with perhaps no honors for himself, no rewards save the consciousness of doing God's will, as he saw it. The three "temptations" represent the struggle within his mind over the choice between those two contrasting aspects of leadership. In the end he rejected the popular idea that God's Kingdom was to be a temporal and material consummation effected by military or other physical forces directed by Deity as a suggestion of Satan. God was a spirit and his kingdom must be spiritual in its nature. Moreover, God was righteousness in the highest and purest degree of perfection. Therefore his kingdom must be a kingdom of righteousness, as John had indicated. His task, then, was not to lead men to conquest, but to show them the way to righteousness that they might be prepared by righteousness to enter the spiritual Kingdom of God. That this was his conclusion, whether the result of his deliberate contemplation in those days of retreat from human surroundings or divinely inspired, is evident from his conduct and teaching from then onward. Such thoughts as these had probably exercised his mind before this time, but here, in this long period of self-denying devotion and of intimate contact with Deity, he reached the decision and the determination that shaped his future course.

Chapter XVI

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

How long Jesus remained in the wilderness, or away from Galilee, is not known. The Synoptic Gospels say that he fasted forty days, but that obviously did not mark the limit of his stay, for it was after his fast that the struggle with the tempter began, which may have been prolonged as his thoughts wrestled with the problems that confronted him. "We must assume," says Schweitzer, "a period of some duration between the baptism and the beginning of his ministry—a longer period than we should suppose from the synoptists."[1]

During this period, whatever its length, the career of John had been cut short by his arrest, ordered by Herod Antipas, and his imprisonment in the formidable and gloomy fortress of Macherus, where he was afterward beheaded. This disaster must have impressed Jesus with the danger of the course upon which he was resolved. But it is clear that he was not dismayed by it. On the contrary, it apparently determined him to declare himself at once and enter upon his own mission.

It is necessary to keep in mind the conditions that existed and that confronted Jesus in his undertaking. To the great mass of the Jews the kingdom meant what the term literally implied—a kingdom in fact, a material kingdom ruled by Jews with the power of Rome destroyed. "Messianism," which included the conception of the kingdom, "was essentially a political ideal. It was bound up with the restoration of the Davidic dynasty and with the reconstitution of the independence of Israel."[2] The hopes and expectations of the people were thus expressed in the so-called Psalms of Solomon, written about half a century before this time:

[1]Schweitzer, Quest of the Historical Jesus, p. 133.
[2]Silver, Messianic Speculation in Israel, p. 13.

"Look upon Israel and bring to her her King,
The Son of David, in the time which thou
hast chosen out, O God!
That thy servant may rule over thy people
Gird him with strength,
That he may crush unrighteous princes.
To him belong the nations of the heathen
Who shall serve under his yoke.
By the subjugation of the whole earth
Shall he give glory to the Lord."[3]

The circulation of such ideas as this, coupled with growing resentment at subjection to Rome, stimulated a fierce and unreasoning nationalism in many hearts, which at the moment was smouldering under the surface but which was soon to burst forth in desperate revolts. It had already brought into existence a party of determined and often fanatical patriots called Zealots who were particularly strong in Galilee. It was in Galilee, indeed, that they had their source, and there, although farthest removed from the place where Roman domination was most conspicuous and most irritating, Jerusalem, nationalism was more ardent than elsewhere. "It was under the leadership of Judas (the Galilean) and of his sons and his grandson that the Zealots became a political party which would brook no compromise and would have no peace with Rome. They were those that would bring about the Kingdom of Heaven, that is the Kingship of God, by force and violence."[4] And it was doubtless they whom Jesus had in mind when he said, sometime much later than the beginning of his ministry: "And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force."[5] If this inference is correct there must have been incipient outbreaks even in this period that were not important enough to be recorded in history. However that may have been, it is certain that there was at this time an undercurrent of fierce patriotic exaltation inspired by the messianic delu-

[3]Psalms of Solomon, chapter 17.
[4]Jewish Ency. V. 12, p. 641.
[5]Matt. 11:12.

sion of a material and all-conquering kingdom of the Jews. This is proved by the numerous and stubborn uprisings against Rome soon after the death of Jesus, that culminated in the destruction of Jerusalem and the final extinction of Jewish political nationality in the following generation. All of these outbreaks seem to have been instigated, and in most instances led, by the Zealots.

Over against this popular tendency were the high powers of state and of formal religion. The Roman Empire, supreme master of the civilized world, and jealous of any encroachment upon its authority, sternly suppressed all rebellion and discouraged all public commotion that might foment rebellion. In the security of its power it was apt to look with contempt upon ordinary tumults, but it did not ignore them. Rome was in direct control of Judea through its procurators. It was in indirect though no less firm control in Galilee and Perea through the tetrarch, Herod Antipas, who was entirely subservient to its commands, and whose interests as a ruler necessarily coincided with those of Rome. To the Roman administrators the current idea of the Kingdom of God was probably regarded as but one of the strange notions of this singular people, to be tolerated as long as it remained but a superstitious hope but not to be countenanced if it led to threatening public disorder. Herod's attitude, no doubt, was much the same. Ideas of a Kingdom of God in which obviously he would have no place were as repugnant to him as to the Romans, a feeling, it may be safely assumed, that was shared by the Jews attached to his fortunes, known as the Herodians. That the main reason for Herod's imprisonment and subsequent execution of John the Baptist was his fear "lest the great influence John had over the people might put it into his power and inclination to raise a rebellion," as Josephus says,[6] is quite probable, although the reason given in the Gospels, the criticism by John of Herod's matrimonial conduct, doubtless contributed to his irritation.

Nor were the high officials of the Jews themselves any less antagonistic to the idea of the kingdom, or any less fearful of the consequences of its effects, as popularly understood, upon the

[6]Antiquities Book XVII, Chap. 5, Sec. 2.

public mind. The majority of the members of the Sanhedrin, the chief civil and religious power, and most of the priestly aristocracy, belonged to the Sadducean party, or "sect" as Josephus terms it. The Sadducees rejected the notion of the kingdom as they did the Pharisaic beliefs in resurrection of the body and immortality. The kingdom was to them a vain and foolish delusion, as, in the common conception of it, it certainly was. Moreover, while they no doubt hated Rome as cordially as other Jews did, they realized that the security of their positions, their privileges, and their fortunes were dependent upon their subserviency to Rome, and they were at one with the Roman officials in condemning any rebellious movements, however grounded, believing them to be utterly futile and inevitably destructive, as subsequent events proved them to be.

In short, of the leaders of the people only the Pharisees, and the scribes among them, had any faith in the coming of the kingdom. They did believe in it with profound conviction. But they differed in their opinions of its nature, and while some of them sympathized with the prevalent nationalistic feelings and all perhaps were filled with the belief that the time of its coming was near—the calculations which pointed to its imminence had come, indeed, from their midst—the majority felt it was a matter entirely within God's hands and did not encourage rebellion. Nevertheless, most of them shared in the common expectation of a temporal, political transformation which, however supernaturally brought about, would make Israel supreme on earth. Comparatively few were impressed with the dreams of a spiritual Kingdom of Heaven, expressed by some of the prophets and apocalyptic writers.

From all this it is obvious that the mission upon which Jesus entered was no peaceful and pleasant task of evangelism, but one fraught with extreme peril and almost certain to lead to disaster, as, indeed, it did. It is difficult to believe that he did not fully realize this. He was no unsophisticated rustic as he is often represented to have been. In that compact little country with its dense population closely knit in racial sympathy any person of ordinary intelligence must have known prevailing conditions

and prevailing sentiments. Jesus was no ordinary man. He could not have been ignorant of the political complexities of the government of his country and province. He must have understood its various and conflicting religious elements. He knew his people, their history, their hopes and their passions. He was familiar with the ardent temperament and the peculiar attributes of his race. He could not have been insensible of the fires that smouldered under his feet, or of the vast material powers that encompassed and threatened him. He understood the nature and the force of the religious opposition which he could not fail to arouse. He had seen what happened to John. In short, it is inconceivable that he did not clearly recognize not only the difficulties but the very grave dangers he had to face. Yet without hesitation, and without fear of consequences, he embarked upon his career, sublimely confident that it was the will of God.

"Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye, and believe the gospel."[7] Thus abruptly, but dramatically, Mark records the entrance of Jesus upon his work, and the nature of it. Matthew says: "Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee," and "from that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."[8]

These statements indicate that the reappearance of Jesus in Galilee, and the beginning of his public ministry, followed immediately upon the imprisonment of John, and were to some extent moved by it; that Jesus promptly took upon himself the task that John had been forced to lay down. It is to be noticed, moreover, that his announcement and his call were at this time identical with those of John except that, so far as the synoptic record discloses, he did not then emphasize the necessity of baptism as John had done. But he did proclaim with equal fervor the conviction that the kingdom was at hand, was about to break upon them, and that repentance was essential to participation in that kingdom.

[7] Mark, 1:14, 15.
[8] Matt. 4:12 and 17.

The kingdom, indeed, was the basis and the constant theme of his teaching from the beginning to the end of his ministry. Every act and every word of his life thereafter had some relation, direct or indirect, to the impending kingdom. But his field and method differed radically from those of John. The Baptist confined himself to the wilderness, remaining apart from the populous regions, and requiring those who would see him and hear him to journey into the waste places. He was at all times a strange and mysterious figure, aloof, remote, in his personality, one who, as it were, sounded the alarm from afar. He was not a teacher. To those who asked what they should do he gave some brief fragmentary directions of an ethical import, but these were obviously incidental to his rôle as a warning voice.

Jesus, on the other hand, penetrated at once into the densely crowded cities and villages of Galilee. He evidently felt that the coming of the kingdom was indeed "good news" and that it should be carried directly to the people, the people of his own region first and preferably, because they were his own, nearer to him in sympathy, their ways and feelings more familiar to him, and perhaps because he thought he could carry on his work in Galilee in greater freedom. At any rate it was to Galilee that he went, and it was to Galilee that he devoted most of his public career, laying there the broad and enduring foundations of his cause. Also he differed from John in that he was no singular, inscrutable, terrifying figure. There was no recorded peculiarity in his garb or his manner of living. He was not an ascetic as was John. On the contrary, he lived among the people, in contact with all classes, eating and drinking with them in social intimacy. He had none of John's austerity. His was a personality abounding in good will and sympathy. Even the children flocked about him.

Moreover, Jesus was primarily a teacher as John was not. And such a teacher! The world has never seen his equal and still it turns to him as the incomparable instructor in the fundamental lessons of life and death. John warned his hearers that a vast cataclysm was at hand and they would have to repent to save themselves from destruction. He spoke to their fears. Jesus

proclaimed the coming of the kingdom as glad tidings, good news, something to cause rejoicing, not fear, save only to the wicked. The judgment and its consequences were indicated by him but in the background, not in the foreground as John revealed it. It was not a God of vengeance or destruction that he described but a God of justice, of mercy, and above all, a God of love, one who desired that all who would be saved should find the way open. And Jesus was at pains to show the way. He revealed to the wondering multitudes who speedily flocked about him a God who was concerned in the welfare of every individual, however lowly, a God who was near and compassionate, and he told them in simple terms how the true righteousness this God desired could be attained and the kingdom achieved for each one of them.

Again, his conception of the kingdom was different from that of John. To be sure, we know very little of John's ideas on this subject. The records are quite inadequate for any satisfying conclusion. They indicate, however, that he anticipated a supernatural catastrophic intervention by which God's reign would be established on earth, the Messiah would assume the rôle of divine judge, the wicked should be exterminated, and the righteous, presumedly only the righteous Jews, would enter into dominion. This was all in accord with the teachings of the synagogues except as to the functions of the Messiah, about which there were differences of opinion, but it did not exclude the commonly accepted idea of a purely temporal political kingdom of the Jews. While it is true that John had nothing to say about the political aspects of the question, so far as the records disclose, there seems no reason to believe that he rejected the political conception of the kingdom. That is to say, there is nothing in what he is known to have said that is inconsistent with that conception.

It seems clear, on the other hand, that Jesus rejected the political idea entirely. It is not that he completely ignores it. John may have done that, and so far as we know did do it. But in the case of Jesus there is ample material to reveal the nature of his views as to the kingdom, and they are, by plain implication, dis-

tinctly antagonistic to the political ideal. It is always a spiritual and never a material kingdom that he visions. It is the reign of God in the hearts of men that he conceives and teaches. The kingdom will come in its fullness. as to its earthly scene, when all men do God's will toward one another and toward Him. Meanwhile, the kingdom is at hand, not in any cosmic convulsions of nature, or in the overthrow of empires by conquering armies, but in the broad and firm beginnings of a new age which Jesus himself was inaugurating, and which unquestionably he did inaugurate—a new age devoted to the increasing development of God's spirit and will as the dominating influence in the progress of humanity. His idea is concisely expressed in his incomparable prayer: "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, in earth, as it is in heaven." The coming of the kingdom and the doing of God's will were essentially interrelated in his thought. The kingdom would come only if, and as, God's will was done.

Jesus did not expect any immediate establishment of the kingdom in the universal sense. There could have been no meaning and little value in this prayer if the kingdom were soon to come, willy-nilly. In the larger sense its coming was to be a process of growth and development, and not a sudden transformation. The prayer indicates this view, and it is made clearer in a number of his parables, for example, the parable of the mustard seed,[9] that of the leaven,[10] and that of the corn.[11] In the first the kingdom is likened to a tiny mustard seed which grows to the stature of a tree, in the second it is as the leaven which hid within three measures of meal gradually leavens the whole, and in the third the kingdom follows the process of the growing of the corn, "first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." Moreover, the ethical principles set forth in the Sermon on the Mount and other passages point to a permanent course of life and conduct rather than to the essentials of repentance in preparation for an immediate judgment. In these Jesus was laying down standards of religious life for a new age, for a develop-

[9]Luke 13:18, 19.
[10]Luke 13:20, 21.
[11]Mark 4:26-29.

ment of the Kingdom of God within human hearts, and there are no intimations in them of a sudden and cataclysmic coming of the kingdom.

To be sure, there are passages that apparently contradict this view of his conception of the kingdom. He says in one place, "Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power."[12] This may, however, have referred to the spiritual transformation that he anticipated, and of which Pentecost may be regarded as the fulfillment. The apocalyptic utterances in the thirteenth chapter of Mark, reproduced and amplified in Matthew 24 and Luke 21, present a more difficult problem. It is hard, indeed, to believe that these passages are authentic. They do not sound like the words of Jesus as they appear elsewhere in the Gospels. The simple, lucid phrases that characterize all his other utterances are absent here. In these chapters he is represented as breaking forth in a torrent of incoherent predictions in the vein of the apocalyptic writers, which, if really his words, must have been as bewildering to his apostles as they have been to students in succeeding ages. Coming from him, as they are said to have come, in the last few days of his life, they are inconsistent with virtually all his previous teachings, and they make him appear to be the victim of visionary fancies that but a few short years proved to be delusion. Many scholars contend that they are not genuine,[13] or that at most they are composed of alien materials grafted upon some authentic words of Jesus, such, for example, as the saying quoted above as to the coming of the kingdom "with power." In support of this critical judgment it is worthy of note that with the exception of some isolated passages these chapters have long been tacitly ignored by most preachers and teachers of the Word.

It is true, of course, that Jesus was reared in an atmosphere in which the expectation of supernatural intervention and judgment was common, that this expectation was frequently expressed in apocalyptic imagery, that he must have been familiar with

[12]Mark 9:1.
[13]See in particular, Streeter, in Oxford Studies.

at least some of these writings, and that in all probability that of Enoch, in particular, greatly influenced his conception of the messianic rôle. But he was not himself of the apocalyptic type. Although he doubtless had his visions, in which the supernatural in the broader sense was ever present, he was not a visionary. His idea of the kingdom was a practical relation between God and men, which divine guidance and human volition would co-operate to establish. And in his teachings he dealt with the realities, the eternal realities, of life. His teaching would not have survived otherwise. There was in it none of the extravagant fancies or the cryptical symbolism of either the prophets or the apocalyptists. His teachings were illustrated with parables whose luminous simplicity and perfect aptness have made them the delight of all ages. To be sure, there is here and there an utterance that reflects the more or less stereotyped imagery of the prophetic or apocalyptic writings familiar to his hearers, but there is very little of this, so little, indeed, that the apocalyptic chapters of the Gospels here under consideration appear to be utterly incongruous.

In any event, these chapters should have little weight in any estimate of his personality or his ideas when they are at variance with the testimony of all the rest of the Gospels, and when time has conclusively proved that in these predictions, if, indeed, he made them, he was mistaken, while in the generality of his utterances he was eternally right.

Nevertheless, it is clear that Jesus did anticipate a speedy inauguration of the Kingdom of God in the purely spiritual sense in which he conceived it, as distinguished from the notions of a physical kingdom that were commonly current among his people, a unique feature of his conception that will be discussed in the succeeding chapter, when we come to the consideration of the messianic aspects of the kingdom as he viewed them.

The attitude of Jesus toward the gentile world, the place of the Gentiles in the kingdom as he saw it, is difficult to determine because of the apparently contradictory terms he uses in passages that are undoubtedly genuine. Jesus was a Jew. Among the Jews of his time a strong prejudice against non-Jews was almost

universal. Such a prejudice is not peculiar. There has always been more or less of that dislike and distrust of "foreigners" in every race and tribe of the world. But among the Jews this was accentuated by the separatist prescriptions of the Law and the particularism of their regulations touching idolatory which tended to make them uniquely exclusive. The tractate Abodah Zara of the Talmud is devoted to these rules. The Gentiles, whatever their religion, were regarded as idolators, heathen, and while economic necessities made business transactions with them unavoidable, any social association with them was rigorously discouraged. In Jesus, as in all Jews, this prejudice, not to say antipathy, toward people of other races thus engendered was inherited and inbred. He could hardly have been entirely free from the influence of this racial and religious antagonism. That he was not free from this influence was manifested in his curt denial of the plea of the Syro-Phoenician woman for help. "Let the children [the Israelites] first be filled," he said to her, "for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it unto the dogs."[14] In sending out the disciples he instructed them: "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not; but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."[15] Again, according to Matthew, he said to the Syro-Phoenician woman above referred to, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel."[16]

But while this incident with the gentile woman reveals in Jesus something of the inherent prejudices of his race, it also reveals that in him it was only skin deep. For when the woman answered his harsh reference to the Gentiles as dogs she quickly answered, "Yea, Lord, yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs," his attitude changed entirely and he readily responded to her appeal. This woman, by the way, was the only person recorded in the Gospels who ever got the better of Jesus in a test of wit. The chief priests and the scribes, the Pharisees and the Sadducees, the leaders of the time, repeatedly crossed

[14]Mark 7:27.
[15]Matt. 10:5, 6.
[16]Matt. 15:24.

intellectual swords with him only to be discomfited. None but the unknown gentile woman overcame him. And he generously conceded it. "For this saying," he said to her, "go thy way, the devil has gone out of thy daughter."

As to the other statements on the limitations of his mission they expressed the ancient prophetic view as well as the views of this period, that the Jews had a primary, if not an exclusive, relation to the kingdom. If it were not to be established for them alone, as most of them believed, they were to have first place in it and the Gentiles were to share in it, if at all, in a secondary way. That the Gentiles were to share had been predicted by some of the broader-minded of the prophets and by a few of the later apocalyptic writers. For example, the Second Isaiah records God as saying, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear."[17] Again, the Lord is recorded as saying to Israel: "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee. . . . And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising."[18] A single example from the apocalyptic writers will suffice. Referring to the Messiah the Parables of Enoch say:

> "He shall be the staff of the righteous whereon to stay
> themselves and not fall,
> And he shall be the light of the Gentiles,
> And the hope of those who are troubled of heart."[19]

Jesus was familiar with these passages and others of similar import. Indeed, Isaiah, of all the prophets, and Enoch, of all that strange company of ecstatic dreamers that succeeded the prophets, seem to have had the greatest influence upon his thought. He could not have been ignorant of, or unimpressed by, the ideas of universalism which they expressed. Moreover, there is abundant evidence not only that these ideas were his own, but that he

[17]Isaiah 45:22, 23.
[18]Isaiah 60:1 and 3.
[19]Enoch, Chap. 48.

regarded the Gentiles with kindly tolerance. An instance of the latter was his healing of the servant of the centurion in charge of the Roman soldiers stationed at Capernaum. It is true that this centurion is said to have been, according to Luke, friendly to the Jews and had even built a synagogue for them, but he was nonetheless a Gentile and an official representative of the Roman Empire which to the Jewish mind at that time symbolized the worst elements of the gentile world. Jesus, however, responded at once and willingly to his appeal for help. Similarly he gave relief to the man of the country of the Gadarenes, who in all probability was also a Gentile, inasmuch as the country of the Gadarenes, or perhaps more properly the Garasenes, was predominantly pagan, which the presence of the swine would indicate even if it were not otherwise well established. Moreover, his tolerant sentiments were expressed in his attitude toward the Samaritans (who although not exactly classed by the Jews as Gentiles were generally detested by them) manifested in the parable of the Good Samaritan, and in the conversation with the woman of Samaria, recorded by John.

However, it is not in these incidents that the universalism of Jesus is revealed. Any Jew of liberal spirit, and doubtless there were many such, might have manifested similar disposition upon occasion. They show that his rebuff to the Syro-Phoenician woman was not an expression of his customary mood, and was probably an uprush of the subconscious, inbred prejudice at a moment when he was weary and mentally distressed, seeking rest and momentary security beyond the borders of his own land. Participation of the Gentiles in the Kingdom of God was quite another matter, one that required a much broader view of the relation of God to humanity as a whole. But that he held this view is proved by a number of passages in the synoptic Gospels, not to mention the general trend of his purposes ideally elaborated in the Gospel of John. For example, after the incident of the centurion he said to those who followed him, directly referring to the gentile centurion, "Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And I say unto you,

That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven."[20] And again in explaining the parable of the Tares he said to his disciples: "He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; the field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one."[21] "The field is the world." There was no racial or geographical limitation to its boundaries. Luke has him saying words of much the same tenor, but on a later occasion, as those uttered in connection with the centurion.[22] Less convincing, because reported to have been said by him after his resurrection, are his words recorded in Matthew and Mark, and in a modified way by Luke, which are frequently referred to as "the great commission."

To be sure, this universalism, howsoever or whensoever expressed, made little or no impression upon the disciples, for it was years before they were reluctantly persuaded, by the pressure of events and circumstances, that Gentiles could have a part in the Kingdom of God. But there can be no reasonable doubt that Jesus had embraced the ideas of Isaiah and Enoch from the beginning and did not restrict his conception of the kingdom to the narrow limits of a race or a province but rather regarded it as boundless. The disciples, indeed, notwithstanding the efforts of Jesus to make it clear to them by statement and illustration, never comprehended the purely spiritual kingdom which he conceived and preached. "We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel,"[23] they said sadly after his death. And in Acts they are reported as saying to Jesus after his resurrection, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" They simply could not get out of their minds the established conviction that the kingdom was to be a temporal, material, and political institution for the benefit of the Jews.

Nevertheless, it is apparent that Jesus shared in the common view, which was held by all of the prophets and all of the apoc-

[20] Matthew 8:10, 11
[21] Matthew 13:37, 38.
[22] Luke 13:28, 29.
[23] Luke 24:21.

alyptists without exception, no matter how broad or how spiritual their conceptions, that the kingdom would have its beginnings and its foundations within Israel. And it is quite probable, therefore, that Jesus felt that in the brief period permitted to him on earth he must concentrate his efforts for these beginnings within the limitations of his own people. And if this inference is correct his saying to the Syro-Phoenician woman that he "was not come save to the lost sheep of the house of Israel," and his instruction to his disciples to confine their attention to the Jews, can be reasonably explained without the assumption that he excluded the Gentiles from consideration.

But, to conclude the discussion of this subject, it is important to realize that the supreme end, the ultimate goal, of the teachings of Jesus was not the Kingdom of God upon earth, but the Kingdom of God within heaven. The earthly kingdom, however spiritualized, and however essential, was a means to this end, not an end in itself. It was in the life after death that the consummation of the kingdom was to be attained, the perfect state of righteousness in harmony with the perfection of God. It is true that his ideas of the kingdom are presented in so many different aspects that it is difficult, if not impossible, to incorporate them in any simple formula, but three aspects of it appear to predominate in and to color all his teachings on this subject.

First of all, and fundamental, is the individual relation to the kingdom. Contrary to the common view of all previous Hebrew leaders, the individual was primary and the nation secondary in his conception. It was not to be a transcendental kingdom of Israel, although Israel was to have first place in it. Much less was it to be a divine empire composed of nations as social or political units. It was to be a kingdom of people, a kingdom made up of individual souls. With God as its foundation the superstructure was to be erected from human personality, from the men and women individually doing God's will. In that aspect the kingdom was already present in the hearts of men who with faith in God were devoutly doing his will. "The Kingdom of God is within you," he said, and it was the chief purpose of his

mission to establish it within every personality by awakening the divinity within it to responsive faith and righteousness.

In the second place, it was to be, sooner or later, a Kingdom of God on earth when all men were doing his will, and it was this kingdom that was "at hand" in its universal beginnings, inaugurated by Jesus himself. This was to be the ushering in of "the day of the Lord," the true reign of God, when before him "every knee shall bow."

And in the third place was to be the heavenly kingdom, to all of which both the individual and the universal kingdom were to be preparatory. "Eternal life" was to be the aim and the goal. Only in the life beyond death was the kingdom to be consummated and complete. That was plainly the ultimate end of his endeavor, and the final realization of his vision. Life on earth was to be a way to life everlasting.

Chapter XVII

RÔLE OF THE MESSIAH

Jesus' idea of the Kingdom of God was in its most important aspects different from that of any of his predecessors or his contemporaries. It was his own. It had its firm roots in the history and the ideals of Judaism, and could have been developed on no other soil, but he so changed its form and flower that it became peculiarly and exclusively a spiritual conception, entirely relieved of the grossness of the political ideas that were commonly attached to it. So, too, with his conception of the rôle of the Messiah, although it is probable, as will presently be shown, that he was greatly influenced by one of the major prophets.

The Messiah was not to be a conquering hero. He was not to set up a material throne and from it rule the world. He was not to bring the heathen in subjection before him or destroy the wicked by the sword. He was not to establish a material Kingdom of God in any sense of the word. On the contrary, he was to be a spiritual Messiah for a spiritual kingdom, a divinely directed minister for the salvation of the souls of men by persuading them to faith and true righteousness.

Moreover, the Messiah, as Jesus conceived him, was to be, in his earthly experience, no person of high worldly position or powers, but a lowly one, accustomed to sorrow and suffering, a servant of servants, a sacrifice upon the material altars of the world.

There can be little doubt that he realized that the true nature of the Messiah had been predicted and described in the "suffering servant" passages of Isaiah. Those passages are unique in the prophetic literature of the Scriptures pertaining to the coming day of the Lord. In them alone is to be found the conception of a Messiah who was not to be a temporal deliverer but one who was to be a spiritual savior through sacrificial service and death in the cause of God. The idea was so opposed to the prevailing convictions of the Jews at all times, so repugnant to their views of the glorious ascendancy of their race in the material world, and seemingly so

utterly illogical from any standpoint, that it obtained no support from subsequent leaders of the prophetic type, or any others, and therefore it stands alone in the scriptural and apocalyptic writings.

Yet the passages in which this idea is presented so aptly describe the character and the conduct of Jesus, at least in his last days, that the likeness has been observed from the beginning of Christianity. Moreover, the whole messianic conception in these passages so nearly conformed to the views Jesus himself entertained that it is difficult to believe that he was not influenced by them in the conclusions he reached and the course he followed.

It is beyond question that in that part of Isaiah from Chapter 40 to Chapter 55, now attributed to an unknown prophet whom the scholars designate as the Second Isaiah or Deutero-Isaiah, the Hebrew religion reached its sublimest heights. In him monotheism receives its most explicit and positive expression. "I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God."[1] "He that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walketh therein."[2] And the God of awesome majesty he depicts is also one of solicitude for human frailty. "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."[3] Moreover, it is a God of infinite tenderness that he describes. "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young."[4] Over and over such expressions of loving-kindness are to be found in those chapters. Jesus in his years of study and contemplation while he was yet a carpenter must have brooded long over the writings of this supreme prophet, for it seems clear that in them are found the roots of his own superior and incomparable conception of the nature of God.

If, then, the inception of his basic ideas as to the deity can be traced to this source it appears obvious that he must have been

[1]Isaiah 44:6.
[2]Ibid. 42:5.
[3]Ibid. 41:10.
[4]Ibid. 40:11.

profoundly impressed by this prophet's description of the Messiah's character and rôle, particularly that which is presented in that matchless fifty-third chapter. Look for a moment at that picture as it is expressed in the vivid phrases of this chapter: "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. . . . He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. . . . He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter. . . . He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. . . . He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth." Certain it is that in the imagery of this chapter and some other passages from the same hand is to be seen a forecast of the later events in the life of Jesus. And this can be no mere coincidence but a literal fulfillment of a prophecy that on its face was utterly incredible. It apparently follows, therefore, that Jesus in taking upon himself the rôle of Messiah deliberately accepted the course laid out in this prophecy as his own, undaunted by the dire end to which it pointed.

It is true, of course, that it was the rabbinical view of this prophecy that it referred to Israel as a nation and many scholars concur in that view. Some, on the other hand, hold it refers to an individual but not to the Messiah. However, there is much to support the conviction that the prophet was depicting the Messiah. "Our conclusions," says an authority of the present day, "is that the servant was an actual person who, on account of his righteousness, was believed by the prophet to be the Messiah. He suffered in a 'naughty' world because of his righteousness, but his suffering was to the prophet of comparatively small moment, because he was convinced that the servant would rise from death to complete his work; and it was the servant's close relationship with God, and the prophet's profound belief in the righteousness and eternity of God, that compelled this conviction."[5] Moreover, there can be no doubt that Jesus put his own interpretations on the Scriptures, and it seems

[5]Oesterly and Robinson, Hebrew Religion, p. 270.

entirely probable that he regarded this prophecy as referring to the Messiah, and therefore to himself.

The belief has been previously expressed that Jesus was convinced that he was the appointed Messiah, at least from the moment of his baptism, and that he had wholly rejected the political ideals which clung tenaciously to the messianic hope among the people generally. If, then, it may be assumed that he accepted the "suffering servant" prophecy as applying to himself he had the road to the cross, or whatever form the tragic end might take, laid out for him from the beginning. And this assumption, if correct, explains much that seems obscure or contradictory in the conduct and the words of Jesus as recorded in the Synoptic Gospels.

In them we find that Jesus did not announce himself as the Messiah, or make any claim that he was, even to his disciples—except in the enigmatic reference to himself as the Son of man, which obviously they did not understand—until that dramatic episode at Caesarea Philippi,[6] immediately after which he "set his face toward Jerusalem" for the final act of the tragedy. But in the suffering servant rôle such an announcement or claim was not only unnecessary but would have been detrimental to his purposes. There was, in the first place, the immediate danger to his person and his cause by a premature claim or admission that he was the Messiah, for this would have drawn about him at once the fanatical elements of his people, clamoring for physical and political action contrary to his wishes, and bringing down upon him almost instantly the forces of Herod or of Rome to encompass his death before the sacrifice was ready. He had a mission to fulfill. He had work to do. He had to lay the foundations of God's purposes in relation to himself in the teaching of a greatly advanced conception of the nature of the deity, of his attitude toward man, and of the quality of righteousness which He demanded as a condition of the kingdom. This work could not have been done in the midst of the political strife which the announcement of himself as the Messiah would have quickly fomented. Moreover, it was unnecessary to reveal himself as the Messiah until these foundations were laid, for this was a matter between himself and God, who somehow through his sacrifice would be

[6]Mark 8:27-30.

glorified and mankind redeemed. It was God, in short, who was to establish the kingdom, a spiritual kingdom, with the Messiah as an instrument to that end, and Jesus was convinced that however inscrutable the method God's will would prevail. There were for Jesus no temporal triumphs in this conception of his rôle. On the contrary it was necessarily one of apparent disgrace and defeat, with an ignominious death as its certain termination. It was triumph after death to which he looked forward with sublime confidence. And it was in this confidence that he, in his last days, predicted his death and his resurrection. If, then, this assumption is correct, Jesus knew from the beginning what he was, what he was doing and where he was going, and he followed the course he saw laid out for him with supreme courage and unfaltering faith.

Nevertheless, he had to embody within the record of his service a definite revelation of God, and a definite and authoritative personality as the medium of this revelation. The Messiah, that is to say, had to be something more than a shadow across the face of the earth; the sacrifice had to be worthy of its transcendent purpose; the personality and teaching of Jesus, the man, had to stand as the basis of human recognition of the spiritual, heavenly Messiah to which his death would give birth.

It is beyond question that Jesus, from the beginning of his ministry, spoke with an authority that no one before him had ever assumed, and this at once arrested attention and aroused admiration, as well as criticism. "They were astonished at his doctrine," says Mark in the first chapter of his Gospel, and Matthew and Luke repeat the statement, "for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes."[7] The scribes, be it said, based all their teachings upon the Scriptures, or upon the established traditions which had the force of law. They were expositors or interpreters; Jesus, on the other hand, presented ideas and principles that were his own, and not necessarily dependent upon any who had spoken or written before him. He told men plainly how they should conduct themselves in their relations with God and with other men, and he spoke always as one fully authorized to do this. The "Sermon on the Mount," for example, is a collection of specific ethical direc-

[7]Mark 1:22.

tions that are in the nature of peremptory mandates, expressive though they are of the finest sentiments of humanity. All Christianity is so accustomed to the form and manner of these prescriptions, and so accustomed also to the recognition of the supreme authority of the speaker, that the positive character of these directions occasions no surprise or question, and therefore it is not easy to imagine the impression such novel, original and forceful teachings must have made upon the Jews of that time, accustomed as they were only to teachers who rested all their authority upon the written or oral law.

Moreover, Jesus did not hesitate to contradict the prior authorities which the scribes regarded as sacred, and substitute his own authority for theirs. "Ye have heard it said . . . but I say unto you," was a frequent expression upon his lips. Nor did he refer as a rule even to the authority of God as the source of his directions, although that was implicit in all that he said. The customary phrase of the prophets was "Thus saith the Lord," but neither this nor any similar phrase was ever used by Jesus. He compelled attention to his own person as of one endowed with the right and the power of direction, embodying in himself an authority that was complete, although, as he believed, it was divinely delegated.

And finally, he assumed a spiritual jurisdiction that to the Jews rested in God alone. To the man afflicted with palsy who was let down through the roof into the room to seek his aid, Jesus said, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee." And then Mark's record states, "But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only?" Jesus perceiving their thoughts said to them: "That ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins . . . I say unto thee," turning to the sick man, "Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house.[8] It is quite likely that when the scribes drew apart they put these thoughts into emphatic words, unconvinced by the healing of the sick man, for it was indeed from their standpoint an intolerable presumption, blasphemy, for any man to claim to do what God

[8]Mark 2:5-7, 10, 11.

alone could do. On another occasion, apparently very soon afterward, for it is recorded in the same chapter of Mark, he said to the Pharisees who reproved him for permitting his disciples to pluck corn on the sabbath day, "The Son of man," meaning himself, "is Lord also of the sabbath."[9]

The frequent use by Jesus of the term, "Son of man," always referring to himself, is one of the puzzling problems of the Gospels. Sometimes it apparently is but a substitute for the personal pronoun, a rhetorical device to give impressive objectivity to his personality. But there are occasions when he certainly gave it a messianic meaning, cryptic though it was, and if this is evident in some instances, such as those quoted above from the second chapter of Mark, it is not improbable that he intended the same meaning at all times, applying to himself a title that could be given a commonplace interpretation, but which concealed within itself a mystical implication of the highest order. It is significant that the term is used nowhere in the New Testament save in the Gospels, with a single exception (Acts 7:56), and that in the Gospels it is used by no one but Jesus himself. It was, in short, his own self-elected designation. Why did he use it? An answer requires some explanation of its origin and the nature of its previous use. It grew apparently out of the need of some term to express the sense of mankind in general, or to distinguish mankind from the agencies of heaven. In one of these two senses, usually the former, it is found in the Old Testament. In Ezekiel it is very frequently used as the appellative given by God to the prophet, perhaps to emphasize his humanity. In Daniel (7:13) it takes on a different meaning, there symbolizing Israel as distinguished from the heathen nations which are in this chapter symbolized as beasts.

This use of the term by Daniel presumedly led to its application by Enoch to the person of the Messiah, and there can be little doubt that it was this use of the expression by Enoch that caused Jesus to apply it to himself. There was much in that writer's vision of the Messiah that would have been attractive to Jesus. For example, these passages:

[9]Mark 2:28.

"And there I saw one who had a head of days,
And his head was white like wool,
And with him was another being whose countenance had the appearance of a man,
And his face was full of graciousness like one of the holy angels. . . .

And he answered and said unto me,
This is the Son of Man who hath righteousness,
With whom dwelleth righteousness."[10]

"He shall be a staff to the righteous whereon to stay themselves,
And he shall be the light of the Gentiles,
And the hope of those that are troubled in heart."[11]

There was, however, much in the ideas of the book attributed to Enoch that could find no place in the messianic conception of Jesus. It is nevertheless probable that the title, Son of man, found in Enoch, and such spiritual qualities and relations to God as this writer suggested, made a deep impression upon the mind of Jesus. Moreover, the title, apart from its mystical implications, had in its scriptural meaning an appropriate application to the essential humanity of Jesus. And it seems, too, a fitting title for a "suffering servant" Messiah. Jesus, therefore, seems to have adopted the title at the beginning of his ministry, as a term expressing both his humanity and his peculiarly intimate relation to God, while at the same time it denoted his messianic claim without clearly revealing it. It was, that is to say, a veiled substitute for the definite title, which he did not deem it expedient for the moment to assume, for the reasons heretofore stated.

In brief, then, Jesus conceived the Messiah as the supereminent Son of God, endowed with full authority to speak for him, to reveal his nature and his purposes, to lay down the principles of righteousness acceptable to him, and to show and to lead the way to

[10]Enoch 46:1, 3.
[11]Ibid. 48:4.

the establishment of the Kingdom of God. At the same time this Messiah, so divinely endowed with such supreme spiritual authority, was to be no kingly figure of temporal splendor, but a lowly human being, associating on equal social terms with other men, understanding their problems, knowing by experience their difficulties, suffering their sorrows and their pains. Instead of an invincible military commander or a political ruler at whose feet the nations would prostrate themselves, he was to be a servant of servants, rejected of men, and was to die a shameful and agonizing death, as a willing sacrifice for the salvation of mankind.

This, to be sure, presents an incredible paradox. How could it be expected that a man, living such a life and dying such a death, could effect the salvation of humanity? How, indeed, could such a man, so living and dying, have any influence whatever on the welfare of his race, not to mention other races? The idea seems on its face to be contrary to all reason, utterly preposterous. Yet the evidence indicates that Jesus believed in it, and believed that in God's hands these results would be attained. And time has proved that he was not mistaken, that his faith was justified. For such a man, living such a life and dying such a death, has been for almost twenty centuries, and continues to be, the greatest regenerative force in the life of the world.

Chapter XVIII

JESUS AT WORK

With such ideas as to the kingdom, and such a conception of his task as the Messiah, fully framed in his mind, Jesus returned to Galilee from the wilderness of Judea to begin his mission. If he went to Nazareth at this time, as we may infer from Matthew,[1] it was probably only to make arrangements for separation from his family and his work. Luke, to be sure, places the incident of his preaching in the synagogue at Nazareth and his expulsion therefrom first in his narrative of the work of Jesus in Galilee, but it is evident from his preceding statement, "there went out a fame of him through all the region," that it was not until he had attracted attention to himself elsewhere that he ventured to return to his home town for a public appearance. Both Matthew and Mark place this event at a later period than the beginning of his ministry.

It is probable that Luke, with his instinctive sense of the dramatic, gave this incident first place in his record, and emphasized it with detail not found elsewhere, because of the marked contrast between the rejection of Jesus at Nazareth and his enthusiastic reception in other parts of Galilee, foreshadowing in a way his later rejection by his own people generally and his acceptance by the larger world of the Gentiles. At any rate we are indebted to him for the vivid and illuminating presentation of an episode that would have been lost to us but for his sense of literary as well as didactical values.

However, it seems quite clear that Jesus went at once to Capernaum, and made that place his residence, so far as he can be said to have had a residence at all thereafter. It was, indeed, hardly more than a center of operations, a place to start out from and return to for his ceaseless journeyings about Galilee during which, no doubt, the Son of man "had not where to lay his

[1] 4:13.

head." Although as he said "the foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests," he had no home in any real sense during his ministry. Obviously he chose Capernaum for his base because of its geographical and social, perhaps also its political, advantages. Nazareth was unsuited for his purposes, not only because of the difficulty of convincing his fellow-townsmen of the merits of his leadership but because it was relatively secluded and remote from the main currents of Galilean life which centered about the lake. Although the highways of empire passed its doors, as we have seen, and a large city was near by, it was around the lake that the population of Galilee was densest and its activities were greatest. No degree of isolation, except momentarily for prayer or rest, appealed to Jesus as appropriate for his mission. He had determined to plunge at once into the teeming mass of Galilean life, at its worst rather than at its best, for he had come "to seek and to save that which was lost," to bring succor to the needy and afflicted, to give comfort to the distressed, to call sinners rather than the righteous to repentance, and he evidently desired to get his message to the greatest number of people possible in the least time.

Capernaum was admirably situated for such a mission. It was in itself a place of importance. It was not a "village" but a city of some magnitude. At the upper end of the lake, near the spot where the Jordan plunging down from Lake Merom flows into the Galilean sea, it looked out upon the richest and most populous region of that exceedingly rich and populous province. It stood upon the great highway from Egypt to Damascus and Mesopotamia. It was a seat of customs, and Rome regarded it as a fitting place for a military post since it maintained a company of soldiers there under command of a centurion. It was, with Bethsaida, the northernmost of that "necklace" of cities that surrounded the lake, so close together as to make of them virtually one city, and it was closely connected with all of them both by water and by land. It was a thriving center of trade and industry. To the westward, and near by, was that Vale of Gennesaret over whose fruitfulness Josephus waxes so eloquent, and all about, away from the lake as well as on its shores, were

numerous cities and villages that could be reached by short excursions. Important among the latter were the town of Chorazin, where Jesus seems to have done much work although there is no specific record of it,[2] and Bethsaida, which Josephus describes as an "opulent" city. Apparently Bethsaida stood near the entrance of the Jordan to the lake, a few miles from Capernaum, and the river divided it into two parts, one on the east bank in the province of Gaulanitis, in the territory governed by Philip, and the other and much smaller part on the west bank, in Galilee, the eastern section being the city to which Josephus refers. Philip had enlarged and beautified it and renamed it Bethsaida-Julias in honor of the daughter of Tiberius Caesar, but it continued to be Bethsaida to the people of that region. Evidently it also was the scene of much of the labor of Jesus.

Perhaps another and even more impelling reason for the selection of Capernaum as his residence was the fact that several of his friends and disciples lived there, namely, the brothers Simon (to whom Jesus gave the name of Peter) and Andrew, and the brothers James and John. According to the Gospel of John he made the acquaintance of Peter and Andrew at or about the time of his baptism, they being the disciples of John the Baptist.[3] These two at all events were the first to attach themselves to the cause of Jesus, being immediately followed, according to the Synoptic Gospels, by James and John. There was already, and probably long had been, a close association between these four men. Probably all of them were natives of Bethsaida, Peter and Andrew certainly so. All of them were fishermen, and as such were partners.[4] They were in comfortable circumstances. Zebedee, the father of James and John, owned a fishing ship, perhaps more than one, and had hired servants under him. Their mother, Salome, was one of those women who "when he [Jesus] was in Galilee followed him and ministered unto him,"[5] which is construed to mean that she contributed to his support. Peter and

[2]Matthew 11:21.
[3]John 1:35-38.
[4]Luke 5:10.
[5]Mark 15:40, 41.

Andrew also owned a ship, and a house in Capernaum which seems to have been a commodious one.

These men, in short, were not the humble, impecunious, and illiterate fishermen they are commonly supposed to have been. The fishing industry on Lake Galilee, as we have heretofore noted, was a highly important factor in the economic life of the region, conducted on a commercial scale, and obviously profitable. They were fishermen in the proprietary sense. They fished for market, in their own ships, with nets, and these ships while probably not large were sailing vessels, not rowboats. Moreover, the probabilities are that they were not ignorant men. The fact that they were chosen by Jesus as his disciples, and that three of the four were ever after the chief among the Twelve, indicates that they were men of more than common intelligence. Indeed, it is hardly conceivable that Jesus, a man of supreme intelligence, would have picked twelve men to be his immediate followers any one of whom was of inferior capacity or knowledge. We know very little about most of the disciples but this seems a reasonable assumption. And as to Peter and John the record is quite clear that they were men of exceptional qualities. Furthermore, when what has been said about the educational facilities available to the children of the Jews in the synagogue schools is recalled, and the fact that their families were far from poor, there can be no doubt that they were fairly well educated. There is certainly no indication of ignorance or illiteracy in their subsequent utterances. There is much more evidence for the belief that these four disciples were intelligent men of affairs of the middle class who knew their way about, than that they were the lowly, unlettered and even uncouth men they are so frequently represented to have been. This very likely could apply in varying degree to all the other disciples, being, as they were, men chosen by Jesus for special service.

It is noticeable throughout the Gospels that Peter, James, and John are first among the Twelve in the respect and confidence of Jesus and apparently also first in his affection. If it be true, as is usually surmised from casual indications in the records, that Salome, the wife of Zebedee, was a sister of Mary, the

mother of Jesus, there was a close blood relation between him and the brothers James and John, which suggests the probability that acquaintance and friendship with these two, and also with Peter and Andrew because of their close association with James and John, had their origin at an earlier period than the baptism. At any rate it seems clear that his regard for them, and theirs for him, had much to do with his making Capernaum his headquarters. It was to the house of Peter, who was a married man, that he went upon his arrival there, and at this house he was thereafter a frequent visitor; probably, indeed, he made it his home, in that restricted sense previously indicated.

It was in this city of Capernaum, then, that Jesus began his ministry, according to Matthew and Mark, which the record of Luke does not preclude. It was here, therefore, that the religion which he inaugurated had its birth, and doubtless its site, recently determined, would be one of the most sacred places in Christendom but for the curse which Jesus laid upon Capernaum because it did not respond as he thought it should have done to the influence of his works there.[6] Even so, the ruins at Tell Hum should arouse increasing interest because of his intimate association with the spot, for it was here that he initiated the activities that were to revolutionize civilization, and because he made it the center of his labors during most of the period of his ministry. And the site is made especially interesting by the discovery of the remains of the synagogue wherein, without much doubt, he preached his first sermon—the synagogue, there is reason to believe, that was built by the Roman centurion.[7]

It was to this synagogue that he went with Peter and Andrew, James and John, on his first sabbath in Capernaum and was called upon to speak. What he said in that epochal sermon is not recorded, unfortunately, but it is in reference to this occasion that Mark said, "they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes,"[8] an impression that no doubt was made wherever he spoke thereafter. It was here, also, and at this time, he performed his first

[6]Matt. 11:23.
[7]Luke 7:5.
[8]Mark 1:22.

miracle, according to Mark. There was in the synagogue, he says, "a man with an unclean spirit," one who in the common belief of the time was "possessed by a demon." And this man cried out, "Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth; art thou come to destroy us?" And Jesus, Mark tells us, rebuked the spirit, saying, "Hold thy peace and come out of him." And at once the demon, crying "with a loud voice," came out of him.

Returning to the house of Peter after the service, they found Peter's mother-in-law ill with a fever. Jesus went to her, "took her by the hand and lifted her up, and immediately the fever left her."[9] On the same day, "after sunset," at which time the sabbath ended, many that were diseased and "possessed by devils" were brought there to Jesus, and a great crowd gathered at the door of the house. And, goes on the chronicle of Mark, "he healed many that were sick of divers diseases and cast out many devils."[10]

Thus it was that, with the strange combination of supremely impressive words with marvelous deeds, which was characteristic of his public career thereafter, Jesus began his mission on that memorable first sabbath day in Capernaum. Very early the next morning, a "great while before day," he rose from his bed and sought a solitary place, presumedly outside the city, to pray. There Simon Peter, and "they that were with him," found Jesus and told him that his presence was greatly desired in the town. "All men seek for thee,"[11] he was told. But Jesus had other plans. "Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth,"[12] he said to them. So it was that he started on his first journey, and, says the record of Matthew, he "went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people."[13]

[9]Mark 1:31.
[10]Mark 1:34.
[11]Mark 1:37.
[12]Mark 1:38.
[13]Matt. 4:23.

Itinerant teachers were not uncommon in the Palestine of that day, and the Jews were accustomed to homilies by the scribes or other religious leaders. Moreover, what were termed miracles were not unknown to them by tradition, by heresay, or even possibly by sight. Their Scriptures were filled with accounts of them. The rabbis, in the Talmudic records, "speak of miracles which occurred continuously during the time of the temple," and "they knew of saints to whom, as to the prophets of old, miracles were of daily occurrence."[14] But in Jesus they saw one whose "works," according to the Gospel accounts, surpassed both in number and in character anything they had heard of, and he was a present and living reality, not something afar off or out of a book. More importantly, he was a teacher who was commandingly and strikingly different, for he not only spoke "as one having authority," but in tones and terms quite unlike any of the speakers they had known. He did not expound the Law, as did the scribes, nor did he preach to them with long words or abstract thoughts beyond the comprehension, and therefore the interest, of the great majority. On the contrary, he talked to them about themselves and their thoughts. He spoke to them in simple words of the things with which all were familiar, the birds of the air, the flowers of the fields, the winds and the waves, the weather, the crops, the market places, the familiar things of their daily life. And he illustrated his teachings with little stories that heightened their interest and strengthened their understanding, little stories that were like pictures held up for them to view. And always within his words was the Gospel, the good news, of the coming kingdom in which they were invited to share. There was, moreover, something fascinating in this man's personality, a magnetic quality that centered their attention upon him, and held them spellbound within the radius of his voice. No wonder, then, that in the dense population of Galilee the multitudes gathered about him to hear him and to see his works. He was the sensation of the hour and rapidly his fame spread throughout Galilee and even into Judea and across the Jordan into Perea.

[14]Jewish Ency. V. 8, p. 607.

Returning to Capernaum from this first journey he found the city eager to see him again. Wherever he went the people pressed upon him from every side. They crowded into Peter's house until there was no room for more, and those who could not get in thronged about the doors. The sick, the crippled, the "possessed," came or were brought seeking his healing ministrations. There was no peace or rest for him anywhere. These were busy days for him, days of constant activity, days of incessant service to man as well as to God.

It was on one of these days that he passed by the seat of customs, where the many and onerous taxes upon traffic were assessed and collected on behalf of the Roman overlords, a business particularly hateful to the Jews because it so clearly manifested their subjection; and the tax collectors, or publicans, were particularly obnoxious and despised not only because they were the agencies of these powers but because they were usually regarded as dishonest. At this customs office Jesus saw a man named Levi, as Mark calls him, but better known as Matthew. And he said to this man, "Follow me." And, says Mark, "he arose and followed him."

That was all; simply a summons and an unquestioning response. In similar terms and with similar answers and action, he had brought Peter and Andrew, James and John, to fall in behind him, leaving the work which had heretofore commanded their time and attention to become unpaid "fishers of men." What was there about this man Jesus to draw men unto him at his call, to forsake everything and follow him? The Gospels offer no explanation. They merely state the fact, simply and concisely. Jesus said to them, "Follow me," and they did so. Apparently they did so without question, condition, or reservation. And with a single exception, all who were thus called and responded followed him to his tragic end, and thereafter followed him in spirit to the termination of their own lives. There must have been a strange, compelling magnetism about Jesus that brought men willingly into his service at his command.

In the case of Matthew it is especially difficult to understand not only his ready response but the call itself. He was one of a

class that was socially and religiously proscribed. He was no doubt well-to-do. The business of taxgathering seems to have been profitable since much of the tax levied went into the pockets of the collectors, as a matter of course, that being apparently the way in which they were paid for their services. And unless the business was very remunerative it is unlikely that Jews would have otherwise been willing to accept the social penalties of the occupation. That Matthew himself had profited by his calling and was in easy circumstances is indicated by Luke's statement that he "made him [Jesus] a great feast in his own house: and there was a great company of publicans and of others that sat down with them."[15] He not only had his own house but obviously it must have been a large house to accommodate such a company. He was therefore, we may assume, a man of means, and with such an occupation must have been more or less what is termed worldly minded, up to this time. Why did Jesus want such a man as he among his disciples, and why did he abandon all this to follow Jesus? We have no answer to these questions. We have only the fact that Jesus called him, and that he became his follower.

It is evident, however, that Jesus recognized in him desirable qualities, and that he was not mistaken in his appraisement. Matthew was thereafter faithful to the cause of Jesus, and while we hear but little of him in the Gospels or in The Acts it is probable that it was he who collected the "Sayings of Jesus" incorporated in the Gospel of Matthew, and those of similar purport in the Gospel of Luke, and if so he performed an invaluable service. That he did not write the Gospel which bears his name seems clear, but it seems no less clear that much of the material in that Gospel came originally from him and thus justifies the name attached to it. It does not appear likely that the Gospel would bear the name of a disciple relatively obscure, and still bearing perhaps the opprobrium of his original calling, unless there was substantial foundation in his connection with its sources. The statement of Papias, bishop of Hieropolis, who was born about the time the Gospel was written, that "Matthew composed

[15]Luke 5:29.

the oracles in the Hebrew language and each one interpreted them as he could," is regarded as contributory evidence. By "oracles" Papias is supposed to have meant the logia, or words, or sayings, of Jesus, and by "the Hebrew language" he meant the Aramaic, the common tongue of Palestine. The inference is that the writer of the Gospel of Matthew, who wrote it in Greek, translated the sayings of Jesus, as recorded by Matthew the disciple, and perhaps attributed the entire work to him. There is therefore fairly good reason to believe that it was Matthew the disciple, Matthew the publican, who recorded the sayings of Jesus presented in the Gospel of Matthew, and perhaps also those in the Gospel of Luke. If so it is a fortunate thing for mankind that Jesus stopped that day at the place where Matthew was collecting the customs and called upon him to follow, for otherwise it is quite probable that the Sermon on the Mount, and possibly all the other sayings not recorded in Mark, would have been lost.

With the appointment of Matthew and Philip, the latter, according to John, having been chosen about the same time as Peter and Andrew, Jesus had six disciples, all from Capernaum or its vicinity, for Philip also was from Bethsaida. From where came the six other chosen ones is not recorded. That they, as well as the first six, were all Galileans, with one exception, is the common assumption which is no doubt correct. It appears, indeed, that a considerable number of persons attached themselves to Jesus in the early days of his mission, as well as later, but that the Twelve were specifically chosen, or ordained. Luke says that "in those days" Jesus went up into a mountain, and "he called unto him his disciples and of them he chose twelve."[16] Mark makes a statement to the same effect.[17] Luke tells us that Jesus "appointed other seventy also and sent them two by two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come."[18]

When and where the Twelve were formally set apart and consecrated, so to speak, is not stated. It appears, however, to have taken place quite early in the ministry of Jesus, and doubtless

[16]Luke 6:13.
[17]Mark 3:13, 14.
[18]Luke 10:1.

on a hill somewhere in the neighborhood of Capernaum. Besides Peter and Andrew, James and John, Philip and Matthew, the Twelve included Thomas, Bartholomew, James the son of Alphaeus, Thaddeus, Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot. We know little about most of them but presumedly they were all men of character or Jesus would not have singled them out for distinction, and each must have had qualities that appealed to his judgment, even Judas Iscariot. It is commonly believed that Judas Iscariot was the only one of the number who was not a Galilean. This view is based upon his surname or appellation Iscariot, which is supposed to represent the term "Ish Kerioth," man of Kerioth. There are, however, other conjectures, and it is quite possible that the Kerioth assumption is wrong and that Judas, like his fellows, was a Galilean. Indeed, it seems doubtful that Jesus after having chosen eleven disciples from among his people, most of them probably acquaintances, would have selected the twelfth from a town in Judea.

From the time of their ordination the twelve disciples accompanied Jesus continuously up to the time of his death, except as they were sent out by him on preaching and healing expeditions, all of them in one recorded instance,[19] but usually they seem to have been in close attendance upon him. In his first journey about Galilee we gather that only Peter, Andrew, James and John, possibly Philip, were with him. Although we do not know precisely when the ordination above referred to took place, it appears safe to assume that in subsequent journeys all, or most of the Twelve, accompanied him. Together they walked to and fro in Galilee, across the Jordan into the territory of Philip the tetrarch, once across the western border into Phoenicia and thence up northward to the base of Mount Hermon, down through Perea and even into Samaria. But aside from Jerusalem, and that stretch of the Jericho road leading down to the Jordan, Judea seems to have seen little or nothing of them.

We must then imagine this group with Jesus at their head, accompanied doubtless by others including notably a number of women, moving among the crowded cities and villages of the

[19]Mark 6:7-13; Matthew 10; Luke 9:1-6.

region, attending Jesus as he preached in the synagogues on the sabbath, as he ministered to the afflicted everywhere, as he taught on highways, by the lake shore, on convenient hillsides, or other open spaces, where multitudes gathered about him. Sometimes his recorded words are addressed to his disciples alone, sometimes to groups of critical scribes and Pharisees, but most frequently to the throngs that sought to hear him and see his works.

It was evidently on one of the earliest of these journeys, if not the first, that Jesus entered the region most familiar to him and visited his home city of Nazareth. Matthew and Mark have little to say of this visit, only that he spoke in the synagogue there, the people who had known him from childhood were offended at him, and he could do little healing there because of their lack of faith. Luke, however, as we have said, makes a major and dramatic incident of this occasion, presumedly from sources that either were unknown to the others or which they neglected to utilize so fully. Luke, in short, tells how and why his people were offended. That they were curious to see again this son of Nazareth who had acquired such fame abroad is obvious, and that he was not wholly unwelcome is indicated by the fact that he must have been invited to speak in the synagogue. It is no less obvious, however, and quite in accord with human nature, that they were skeptical about the greatness of this young man who had so recently been an inconspicuous carpenter among them. When he opened the book and read from the sixty-first chapter of Isaiah about one who said "The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted," and so on, this was quite in accord with usual custom, and they were favorably impressed by the manner and matter of his reading. Nor, we may suppose, were they offended when he said to them, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears," for in all probability the significance of that statement was beyond them. But when he reminded them that when in days of old there was a great famine, and although there were many needy widows in Israel yet the prophet Elijah was not sent by God unto any of these but to a woman of Sidon; and that also

Elisha was sent to heal Naaman the Syrian and not the lepers of Israel—this was altogether too much, for this plainly implied not only that Yahweh might have some regard for the Gentiles but that on occasion he might give them preferential consideration. It was Scripture, to be sure, but its implications were offensively heretical and his fellow-townsmen were greatly enraged by his amazing presumption. So they drove him out and would have done violence to him if he had not avoided them and went on his way, never to return again. Wherever Jesus went he seems to have been received with unfailing popular acclaim. Whatever the scribes and the Pharisees may have thought about him, the people evidently approved him and his works. Only in his home town was he rejected and cast out. "A prophet," he said, "is not without honor save in his own country." There was irony as well as truth in that reflection—and still more irony in the fact that Nazareth alone among all the numerous towns of Galilee has flourished ever since upon the veneration accorded by mankind to her rejected carpenter.

It was said above that Jesus and his disciples "walked" through Galilee. This is literally true. Wherever we see Jesus in the pages of the Gospels he is walking, save when he is on a boat crossing the lake. He and his followers traveled over the greater part of Palestine, always on foot. Only once does Jesus ride, and that for ceremonial reasons on his entry into Jerusalem in his last days. Walking, indeed, was the common mode of journeying for the great majority of the people. The pilgrimages to Jerusalem for the great festivals were not as a rule processions of riders but of pedestrians, trudging happily along the dusty roads, singing on the way up to Zion. Even in the caravans of trade, camels and asses were usually the bearers of merchandise rather than of persons. Horses seem to have been scarce, never used as beasts of burden, and only for riding or for drawing chariots by the military forces and the wealthy. Jesus mentions every sort of domestic animal—the ox, the ass, the camel, the goat, the sheep, but never does he speak of the horse. Never, indeed, in all the New Testament is there any reference to the horse, except in the mention of the military detachment that con-

ducted Paul from confinement at Jerusalem to imprisonment at Caesarea, in the symbolism of Revelation, and once in the Epistle of James. It seems strange that the horse was so uncommon an animal in a land whose southern reaches projected into Arabia, which for centuries has been the source of the finest breed of horses, until we learn that in the days of Jesus the Arabians themselves were not horsemen and the famed Arabian horse was developed after that period.[20]

The Gospel of John says that "after these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry [Judea], because the Jews sought to kill him."[21] That expresses the habit of Jesus and his disciples—wherever they went they walked. And this suggests another thought. Palestine is predominantly a mountainous country, and Galilee almost wholly so. Walking therefore was largely a matter of ascending and descending, of climbing up and down hills. There was, for example, a difference in altitude of 2,300 feet between Nazareth and Lake Galilee, but 20 miles apart, and still greater differences between the lake and other points. Walking in that region was a test of strength, and only hardy mountaineers, bred to it and inured to it, could have walked habitually there, indifferent to its varying altitudes, as these men did. Jesus himself was accustomed from infancy to walking among these hills. He was physically as well as spiritually and mentally fitted there for his mission. From childhood he had been occupied with manual labor that gives full exercise to the muscles. The work of the carpenter in that day was arduous, and most of it dealt with rough materials which had to be shaped and fitted with crude tools. No weakling could have been a successful carpenter under those conditions. Strength was essential to skill. There is reason to believe, therefore, that Jesus was as strong in the flesh as he was in the spirit, a virile, energetic, masterful and courageous man.

[20]Ridgeway, Origin and Influence of the Thoroughbred Horse, p. 201.
[21]John 7:1.

Chapter XIX

THE RELIGION OF JESUS

It has been necessary to discuss Jesus' conception of the Kingdom of God and the character and rôle of the Messiah in relation to the kingdom in considerable detail because they are essential to an understanding of his personality, his teaching, and his mission. He was a product of that development of the religious thought of Israel that had brought the religion of the Law into existence, and as its complement the ideal of the kingdom, to be supernaturally established by God in conformity with the implications of the ancient covenant. This ideal, therefore, and that of its accompaniment, the divinely endowed Messiah, were the foundation upon which he necessarily based his own conceptions of religion and its function in human life.

Consequently it was inevitable that his teaching should be related to these foundations and give expression to the spiritual conceptions erected upon them. His mission, the messianic mission, was to be an instrument in God's hands for the establishment of the kingdom. This was to be accomplished by his sacrifice, and, as a preliminary to this sacrifice, by teaching men how to do God's will on earth. But what was, what is, God's will? That question could not be answered intelligently without an understanding of the nature of God, and that understanding is the chief gift of Jesus to mankind.

Jesus' idea of God was something more than a "conception" of him. That word indicates a result of a process of thought. He seems rather to have arrived at a knowledge of God through direct contact with him; that God had somehow revealed himself to him as to no other; that he had in a sense seen God and thereby acquired an understanding of him in a degree beyond the reach of thought unaided. Else how explain the fact that this young Galilean carpenter gave the world an idea of God so exalted and yet so intimate, so perfectly in accord with the highest conceptions of human reason and the highest suggestions of human intuition, that through twenty centuries of profound and persistent thought upon the sub-

ject mankind has been unable to find a flaw in it or to improve it? It stands today, as it stood then, a complete answer to all inquiries in this direction. If there is a Supreme Being, creator and director of the universe, it must be such a being as Jesus depicted, for no other is conceivable that would meet the requirements of reason and of intuition. And it seems highly probable, if not certain, that this knowledge of God, this firsthand acquaintance, was not acquired all at once, in a flash of inspiration, but was the result of an absorbing consciousness of God developed through the frequent communions of those long years of seclusion.

The attribute of fatherhood was primary in the God whom Jesus knew and presented to mankind. In the sense of creator the idea was common in the ancient world. The term "father" is applied to deity in the Egyptian "Book of the Dead," in the Homeric hymns of primitive Greece and in other very ancient writings. "Dyaus piter, Zeus pater, and Ju-piter are sky-father for Sanskrit, Greek and Roman,"[1] and in not a few early religions the sky-father and the earth-mother were dual divinities, or rather complementary terms for the deified productive forces of nature. Israel used the word in a higher, more nearly personal, sense than this, as the one who was the divine guardian of the race. The term father "when used of God," says the Jewish Encyclopedia, "generally refers to the covenant relation between him and Israel."[2]

The idea of fatherhood therefore was not wholly new and original. But Jesus, as no one before him had done, saw it as the primary and controlling principle of deity. He so transformed the idea, so expanded it with power and with beauty, that the God of Jesus became infinitely more attractive, more satisfying to the souls of men, more comprehensible and logical to the minds of men. The seers of many lands had caught glimpses of the nature of deity and the prophets of Israel had progressively approached to a near vision of God's attributes, but Jesus revealed him, as it were, unveiled.

The mystery and the might of a Supreme Being, creator and director of the universe, are beyond human comprehension. The power can be realized but not understood. This realization prompts

[1] Atkins, Procession of the Gods, p. 113.
[2] Vol. V, p. 351.

awe, worship, supplication, but it does not prompt love. The conception of love in the relations between God and man was by no means absent in the recorded thought of Israel. Indeed, love of God was enjoined in the Shema which every Jew was required to repeat daily, and there are frequent expressions in the Scriptures of God's love for Israel. But love, as applied to a being remote in the heavens, omnipotent, superlatively splendid, must have been a difficult emotion, however much his mercies might be acclaimed. Although many exceptions can be cited, fear rather than love must have been the predominant feeling of the Hebrews toward their God, as in fact it was the predominant feeling of all people toward their gods.

But the qualities of fatherhood are fully within the grasp of the human mind and heart, for all men are more or less familiar with them. And when Jesus revealed God as a father, a real father, with all the love, the tender solicitude, the anxious concern, of the human father, multiplied by infinity, he gave to the world a God in whom love was the supreme attribute, and for whom it was not difficult to feel and to express a love in return. Constantly, almost exclusively, he spoke of God as the Father, and not merely as "My Father," which he felt that he as the appointed and anointed Son of God had a peculiar right to claim, but as "your Father," "our Father," the Father, he clearly implies, of all men.

Nor was he content merely to call God the Father and leave its interpretation to his hearers. He repeatedly impressed upon his disciples, and to others who listened to his words, the meaning and significance of the term in his teaching. He wanted them to realize that a proper understanding of it was essential, that indeed it was fundamental. And so by simile and by story he illustrated the likeness of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of men, in its best expression, the one as in the other being actuated by love. The most beautiful and moving picture of that divine fatherhood and love he presented in the parable of the Prodigal Son.

It was not a remote God that he depicted, but one that was at hand, intimate, sympathetic, kindly, tender, protecting, forgiving, having a parental interest in every individual, whatever his social status, whatever the errors of his conduct, grieving when he strayed

from the right, rejoicing when he returned—in short, a loving and therefore a suffering God. It was, on the whole, a new idea in the world, an idea at once so simple and so profound that it captivated the thought and the feeling of mankind as no other idea had before, and no other idea has since. And still it remains, and doubtless will ever remain, the master idea in all human reason and emotion—a God of the universe who is the Father of men, who cares for his children and watches over them, who rejoices with them and sorrows with them.

And yet the God whom Jesus revealed was nonetheless a God to be reverenced, to be worshiped. He in no sense depreciated his power, his majesty, his justice. That he was immanent, close, reachable to anyone by a whisper or an unuttered thought, did not alter the fact that he was God of the universe, the omnipotent Creator. It meant simply that he encompassed and pervaded all. He was there, about them, clothing the lilies of the field, noting the sparrow's fall, numbering the hairs on the heads of his children, as the metaphors of Jesus expressed it, yet at the same time in heaven. "Our Father who art in heaven," began the prayer he gave to his disciples, and this was followed with an expression of deep reverence, "hallowed be thy name." In Matthew's version it ended with a recognition of the magnitude and the splendor of the deity, "for thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory."

Religion consisted foremost in personal loving loyalty to this Father, endeavoring with sincerity to do his will, having abiding and unfaltering faith in him whatever the adverse circumstances, trusting in him as the little child trusts his human father; being loving because he was loving, being kindly because he was kindly; being forgiving because he was forgiving. While all men were his sons, and had implanted within them the spark of his divinity, to be his son in spirit and in truth, and to be worthy of the divine relation, was to be as nearly like him, and to do as nearly as he would do, as human limitations would permit. "Be ye therefore perfect, as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." That was the goal which Jesus set up as the highest ultimate of human endeavor, a goal to strive for unceasingly even though it can never be fully attainable.

Jesus' revelation of the nature of God had as its supremely important consequence the elevation of human personality. If men were the sons of God they were not and could not be insignificant in his sight, mere grains of sand upon the shores of the universe. Each human soul was a thing of value, a pearl of great price. And this value was not lessened or increased by the social status of the individual. The lowest and the highest were potentially equal, the status of each one as a son of God being dependent solely upon his personal endeavor to do God's will, his love for and faith in God, and his conduct toward his fellow-men in conformity with that love and faith.

It necessarily followed also that all men were brothers, and that no distinction of race or class or caste or condition could alter that relation. This essential principle of the religion Jesus taught involved a radical revolution in human thought and action that is yet far from consummation, although it is to be credited with most of, perhaps all of, the social advances of civilization in subsequent ages. It laid upon each individual of mankind an imperative obligation of brotherly regard, support and help. To the question of Cain, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Jesus answered, in effect, with an emphatic affirmative. To the well-known command of the Law, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," he added, as a necessary corollary, the less known and much less regarded commandment of the Law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." And he expressed the latter duty in his own positive terms, "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."[3]

In brief, then, the religion of Jesus consisted of these simple fundamentals, love of God and of men—love of God as the divine Father of all, the source of all good, and of men as his children. There was nothing complicated or mystifying about this. A child could understand it, and, as he implied, a child did understand it. It was not a doctrine but a faith. It was not a theology but a way of life. It did not present any creed for acceptance. It required no declaration of belief *about* anything. To be sure, its foundation was belief, but belief *in* God. Belief *about* God is an intellectual

[3]Matt. 7:12.

acquiescence in a theory of God's existence or of his nature. Belief *in* God is not an intellectual exercise, but an intuitive trust. One may have a very definite belief *about* God and have no religion. Belief *in* God *is* religion and there is no religion without it.

And it was religion in which Jesus was concerned—religion and nothing else. All that he said and all that he did pertained to the religion he revealed and taught. The Kingdom of God was exclusively a religious ideal. He as the Messiah had been commissioned to inaugurate that kingdom. This was the sum and substance of his ministry. "I must preach the Kingdom of God," he said, "for therefor am I sent." He sought, in short, to initiate such a relation between men and God, such a conformity among men to the will of God, as would under God's guidance make the ideal a reality. To that end he labored, and to that end he expected his sacrifice to contribute.

Accordingly he concentrated his attention upon the essentials of such a relation, upon the kinship of God and man, the spiritual consanguinity, which commanded a mutual affection between God and men, as between father and sons, and a common affection for one another as sons of a common father. This was therefore a relation of the heart, and that relation established and in operation nothing else mattered much. The Kingdom of God was a kingdom of love, here and hereafter, and religion was simply the expression of that love in one's feeling toward God and his fellow-men. It followed that whatever in human conduct contributed to that expression was in accord with God's will, and righteous; whatever impeded that feeling or congealed its warmth, and, still more importantly, whatever was antagonistic to that feeling, was not in accord with God's will and was unrighteous.

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and thy neighbor as thyself. On these, said Jesus, "hang all the law and the prophets," meaning that they comprehended the essentials of religion, that all else was of minor importance.

Chapter XX

THE ETHICS OF JESUS

In the teachings of Jesus religion was primarily a personal relation between each individual and God. It was essentially expressed in one's feeling toward God, one's trust in him, one's love for him, and one's devotion to him in the effort to do his will. In the individual its exercise was not dependent upon religious ceremonials or ecclesiastical regulations, however much they might support and promote religion in general. Jesus, indeed, had very little to say about such externals except to condemn the formalisms that were obviously superficial and hypocritical as distinguished from those that were outward manifestations of genuine inward devotion. In all things it was the feeling manifested in the act that mattered, not the act itself.

So in the relations between man and man what really mattered, what supremely mattered, was the expression of that divine sentiment which in Jesus' teaching was the sum and substance of true religion. Jesus' mission was purely and wholly religious. He was bent upon inaugurating the Kingdom of God in the hearts of men, nothing more, nothing less, and all that he taught had this specific purpose in view. Jesus was not a social reformer. There were social evils and social injustices in his day that could not have escaped his attention. Slavery, for example, was universal. It was a great economic as well as moral wrong. Yet, he ignored it. There were innumerable other wrongs about which he might have declaimed but did not. If, indeed, he had undertaken to reform social conditions as he found them he would have expended his energies upon temporal matters and would have become engaged in conflicts that would have been futile in themselves and destructive to his aims. We would probably never have heard of him and the values of his life would have been lost to mankind. For social problems change with time. Jesus chose rather, and chose wisely, to deal with things that are timeless, with the unchanging elementals of

the relations of man with God and with his fellow-men. The end he sought is eternal. By pursuing this course resolutely, by concentrating his attention upon the fundamental essentials of righteousness in human life, he made himself the supreme teacher for all ages, his lessons as timely in one era as in another, as fresh and as significant in our day as in that in which he lived and moved. And because he did this, because he enunciated the vital and imperishable principles of human conduct, he has ever been, and still is, the greatest influence for social betterment and social progress in the affairs of mankind.

Moreover, Jesus was not concerned with ethics as ethics. He was profoundly concerned with ethics as an element, and an essential element, of religion. But the ethical principles which he taught were always related to, subordinate to, and dependent upon the religious objectives. God loved his children, therefore his children should love him and love one another. He thus made religion a triangle—love flowing from God to man, from man to man, and then from man back to God, a continuous current of the divine spirit. The flow from man to man was a necessary link in the divine circuit, and religion accordingly must have this threefold aspect and exercise, both to serve the will of God and meet the needs of men. In this, again, he was supremely right. For unless ethics is motivated by religion, by some sense of responsibility to a superior being which demands ethical conduct in human relations, it is lacking in the most powerful and pervasive influence that can be applied to its expansion.

So it was that while Jesus labored unceasingly to impress upon his disciples, and upon all others to whom he spoke, the importance of true righteousness in human relations, it was always the religious motive that he applied to such teachings. Men should do unto others as they would have others do unto them not merely because this was inherently right but because it was God's will, and an essential principle of conduct for the coming of the Kingdom of God. In this rule, so well called the Golden Rule, Jesus epitomized his ethical teachings. It gave to each and every man an individual principle of action in relation to his fellows that encompassed every duty in that relation. Every

man wants to be treated by others fairly, justly, with kindly consideration, with sympathetic understanding, with helpful attention when in need or afflicted. Therefore let him so treat those with whom he is associated or with whom he comes in contact. This does not bar self-consideration or self-respect. On the contrary, it is an affirmation of both. If one wants to be esteemed, to be held in respectful and friendly regard, one has but to follow the rule. Nor does it imply that one should do unto others what *they* think ought to be done. That would be a surrender of one's individual right of judgment that Jesus did not call for. The judgment, the decision and the obligation are one's own, measured solely by his estimate of what one would want others to do to him, and by his conception of his duty as one of the children of God.

The point that Jesus stressed was the equality of men in the sight of the Father. He recognized no distinctions of class or condition. There was a divinity in each man that was entitled to respect, however lowly that man might be, and Jesus constantly taught that the manifestation of this respect was in accord with God's will. And this, he made clear, was a common obligation applying to all classes and in all circumstances. It was not only an obligation of the fortunate to the unfortunate, of the high to the low, of the rich to the poor, but of the unfortunate, the lowly and the poor to one another and to those above them in station. It was, in short, a reciprocal relation of good will among men, and all in the service of God. Jesus did not seek by this or any other teaching to level social ranks. There were wide differences of rank and of condition in the Galilee of his day, as everywhere and always. He neither approved nor condemned them. They were outside his sphere of interest and duty. What, indeed, were the petty social and political distinctions of men when each man was a son of God and all of potential equality in the kingdom! What he taught was that each man, regardless of station or of circumstances, should love the Father and deal rightly with his fellow-men.

In much of his teachings he gave form to fundamental principles of conduct in the relations between men, principles so

revolutionary in their nature that they must have amazed his hearers. Indeed some of them seem so contrary to human instincts, or to the customary habits of thought and conduct, that they are still regarded by a great number of students as impracticable. This view, however, arises largely from the assumption that the words of Jesus are to be literally interpreted, that he meant precisely what he said. As a matter of fact Jesus frequently did not mean to be, or expect to be, interpreted literally. Jesus was an Oriental, and accustomed to the oriental habit of speaking in terms of more or less exaggerated symbolism. And he spoke to an oriental people who correctly appraised, and were not deceived by, such terms. When Jesus said, "If thy right eye offend thee pluck it out and cast it from thee," he would have been shocked if anyone had taken him at his word and done as he directed. Nor is it recorded that any of his hearers so mutilated himself, although it is probable that most of them had been guilty of the offense to which the saying referred.[1] What he apparently meant was that the eye should be as strictly disciplined as the heart or the mind in the attainment of righteousness. At any rate we can be sure that his hearers understood that his words were figurative and not to be literally interpreted.

The Old Testament is rich in rhetorical passages that greatly exaggerate fact as a means of vividly impressing truth, while many others merely illustrate the oriental propensity to overstatement. This tendency is no less obvious in all of the writings of the New Testament.[2] For example, Mark says that "there went out unto him [John the Baptist] all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized."[3] Literally construed, this is a statement that all of the people in the whole land of Judea, including Jerusalem—men, women, and children, numbered by hundreds of thousands—left their homes and their vocations, and went to the Jordan to be all, without exception, baptized by John, a manifest impossibility. Mark had no thought of conveying such an impression. He meant

[1]Matt. 5:28.
[2]Douglas, Overstatement in the New Testament.
[3]Mark 1:5.

only to emphasize the fact that there was a great outpouring of people from Judea to hear John and that many were baptized.

There was not much of this form of exaggeration in the sayings of Jesus but there was a great deal of that form of overstatement designed to make more impressive a truth or a principle. Thus in that well-known saying which has distressed so many good people, and that has been the subject of endless arguments for centuries, that "it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God," Jesus used here a figure of speech to illustrate by its striking contrast the difficulties that a rich man encounters in the effort to be righteous. The same figure is used in his reference to Pharisees who "strain at a gnat and swallow a camel." It is obvious that he did not mean that to be taken literally, for not even the most stubborn literalist could believe that a Pharisee or any other man could swallow a camel or would try to swallow a gnat.

It was with such picturesque and vivid figures of speech that Jesus gave life and color to his teachings and due allowance must be made for this tendency to hyperbole if his ethical admonitions are to be fairly interpreted. Jesus was not a visionary dreamer or an impractical idealist. His ideals, to be sure, were exalted and far from easy of attainment, but his entire purpose was to make them attainable. And if his teachings are interpreted in the light of his oriental nature and environment, and not according to occidental ideas of literalism—that is to say, if they are interpreted as he meant them to be interpreted, and as doubtless his hearers interpreted them—much that seems impracticable or even impossible in his teachings will disappear.

For example, it is not difficult to recognize the hyperbole in the saying about the "mote" and the "beam," and to realize how greatly the figure of speech clarifies and emphasizes the point Jesus was making. "Judge not that ye be not judged," he said. That was the principle of conduct he wished to impress upon his hearers. But standing alone, without explanation or illustration, it would have been accepted as a fine-sounding but

rather vague aphorism. But Jesus did not leave it that way. He went on to explain that judgment had its certain consequences. "For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again," he said. And then he proceeded to illustrate:

"And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."[4]

Now when we understand that the "beam" to which Jesus referred was a beam of wood, or a "plank," as Moffatt translates it, we can better appreciate both the extent and the force of the exaggeration. Of course, no man ever had a plank in his eye, nor did Jesus mean to say that anyone could have. It was much as if he had said, Why concern yourself with the cinder in your brother's eye when you have a ton of coal in your own? It is the violence of the contrast that makes it impressive. We are apt to find fault with others when we ourselves have much greater faults. We should free ourselves from our own faults before we can be competent to judge the faults of others. That was what Jesus meant, and obviously if we did that we would have little time to bother about the faults of our brothers. Jesus, however, we may assume, did not intend by this that we should have no judgment as to the qualities or conduct of others. That would be to deprive us of the right of opinion that is essential to our estimate of others. What he condemned was the articulate faultfinding, the meddlesome and usually hypocritical faultfinding, that so often unjustly wounds or offends. There are few if any greater causes of unhappiness than this. It is a sin to which the "unco' guid" in all ages have been particularly disposed, and Jesus obviously had no use for the "holier than thou" attitude. Such judgment is inconsistent with the gospel

[4]Matt. 7:1-5.

of love or the Golden Rule. "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her,"[5] said Jesus to the Pharisees who had brought to him a woman taken in adultery, there illustrating in his own action the principle that here he illustrated in hyperbole.

It is plain, then, that Jesus deliberately employed exaggeration as a means of rhetorical effect, and that this was in accord with the highly imaginative genius of his race. If this is so clear in many of his sayings it is proper to consider the probabilities of overstatement in all other sayings where it is not so apparent but which present obstacles to literal interpretation. Take as an example the familiar teaching as to "turning the other cheek." It is difficult to believe that Jesus meant that and the accompanying directions to be taken literally. He himself did not turn the other cheek when they "mocked him and smote him" in the garden of Gethsemane. However, when we assume that this also is a figurative and hyperbolic expression and consider it in connection with the context the difficulty disappears. What was the occasion, and what the specific principle to which it, and the others, applied?

Jesus was condemning the law and the custom of retaliation, of revenge for wrong. "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." The law in Exodus declared "thou shalt give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe,"[6] and Leviticus and Deuteronomy contain similar provisions. This, of course, was the official punishment prescribed for personal injuries. He who injured another must pay in similar injuries to himself. But it was also the rule of private retaliation, not only among the Jews but among other people, and it is still a rule that is practiced in principle to some extent in all countries. It was the latter particularly to which he referred, for he was discussing the principles of righteous individual conduct, when he continued with these

[5] John 8:7.
[6] Exodus 21:23-25.

words: "But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also."[7]

Bearing in mind that it was retaliation of which he was speaking, the common disposition to return blow for blow, or to seek compensatory revenge for personal injury, and also bearing in mind Jesus' habit of figurative rather than literal expression, it seems clear that this also was figurative and intended to impress by its contrast the virtue of forbearance. Literally to turn the right cheek would be to invite further attack, to say in effect, "Come on, strike me again." There could be no moral value in that, and it was with moral values that Jesus was concerned. Do not retaliate, his saying implies. There is no virtue and no profit in revenge. There are moral courage and moral grandeur in forbearance. "To revenge is no valour, but to bear," says Shakespeare, echoing what must have been the thought of Jesus.

Revenge is quite a different thing from that self-defense which is the first law of nature, or the defense of one's family, one's home, or one's land. The words of Jesus here under consideration had no reference to this, and nowhere did he condemn a defense of such nature. Nor did these words imply a passive attitude in all circumstances. Jesus of all men practiced what he preached; his ethical ideals were illustrated in his life. In defense of his principles he was aggressive, even militant. His controversies with the scribes and the Pharisees, wherein he delivered smashing blows for every one he received, and his cleansing of the temple court in the last days of his life, when he delivered physical blows, are proof of that. Jesus' physical as well as moral courage is beyond question. He submitted at the end to blows and to the infliction of death without resistance because that was in accord with his plans and purposes, the sacrifice that he had resolved upon as the essential termination of his earthly mission. At all times his conduct was determined by what he held to be righteous in the particular instance. Revenge he regarded as unworthy of any son of God, prompted by evil

[7]Matt. 5:39.

and promotive of evil. Therefore he condemned it in the figurative manner characteristic of his method of teachings.

The same considerations apply to his further admonitions on this subject:

"And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.

"And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

"Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away."[8]

The difficulties which arise from literal reading of these disappear if they also are regarded as figures of speech in which exaggeration is designed to make more impressive the folly of contention and strife, and, in the third saying, the virtue of kindly benevolence. That this view of their hyperbolic character is warranted may be made clear by analysis of the sayings. As to the first, it should be understood that the words "coat" and "cloak" do not refer to the garments of such name that we now wear. They refer, of course, to the costume of that time, which consisted as a rule of an inner and an outer garment, nothing more. When, therefore, both were taken the man was stripped naked. Obviously Jesus did not mean this. Possibly also the lawsuit was intended merely as a symbol, but in any case it seems reasonable that he wished to counsel the avoidance of differences that create animosities, and that it is better to make some sacrifice than to turn a brother into an enemy. The principle there expressed could be applied to any controversy, remembering that love, friendship, forgiveness, were the heart of Jesus' teachings as to the relations of men.

As to the second of these three sayings, it doubtless refers to circumstances of the time which have no comparable application in modern life. Who in these days would compel anyone to go with him a mile? And if anyone would or could, what service could be rendered by going with him twice as far? There was then, however, a Roman law under which a Roman soldier could

[8]Matt. 5:40-42.

require a native of any of the subject provinces to carry his load for a certain distance.[9] In the neighborhood of Capernaum, where a military guard was stationed, this authority may have been exercised with sufficient frequency to serve as an illustration of the point Jesus wished to impress upon his hearers by this saying. Rome was the great public enemy of the Jews, and at this time particularly such exactions must have been bitterly resented. They therefore presented an extreme example of that self-restraint and forbearance toward one's enemy that Jesus sought to inculcate. But while it may have had a literal application to this compulsory service, it obviously had a much broader and general application and in this latter respect it was undoubtedly figurative and purposely exaggerated. It was not nonresistance that he was counseling so much as the active spirit of good will under the most trying conditions. Nonresistance is at best a negative virtue, and where it is moved by cowardice it is no virtue at all. The goodness that Jesus taught was always positive and purposeful. To do more than one is required to do is a constructive service in all circumstances, a principle that has valuable application in every walk and condition of life. But in particular it is disarming to enmity, and it was at this that Jesus was aiming.

The third of this group of admonitions is in accord with the others, but differs from them in that it especially emphasizes benevolence. "Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away." Literally interpreted, this seems to imply that one should lend as well as give to all who ask. Nor is there any limitation or condition applied to what one should give or lend. That, so interpreted, is obviously impracticable. The one who practiced it would soon have nothing to give or to lend, and if the practice were general it would result in universal poverty. But to take it literally is to do Jesus an injustice. He meant no such unconditional application. Here as in the other sayings above discussed he overstated the requirement in order to make it more impressive. It was a kindly and generous consideration for the needs of others that

[9] Purinton, Reinterpretation of Jesus in the New Testament, p. 117.

Jesus sought to promote, not a promiscuous giving where need did not actually exist, or that if continued would destroy the ability to give. As to lending, he probably had in mind another condition of his time and place. The law did not permit a Jew to lend to a Jew at interest. There was therefore no profit in lending among themselves. But a Jew could lend to a Gentile at any rate of interest he could get. Naturally a Jew with spare funds and desirous of gain would prefer to have his money go into gentile hands and would be less inclined to lend to his own people. It followed that lending to another Jew was a matter of accommodation that would bring no direct return, or a matter of friendly and sympathetic interest. It was to Jews that Jesus was speaking and it was this interest that Jesus wished to encourage. Turn not away from one who would borrow, said Jesus, but give attention to his plea, the attention that one brother should always be ready to give to the needs of another.

In the Gospel according to Luke these admonitions are immediately followed by, and conjoined with, Luke's version of the Golden Rule—"And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise"[10]—indicating that they are to be taken in relation to, and in accord with, this rule, as we have previously intimated. If this inference is correct it supplies a measuring rod for a reasonable interpretation of these sayings, apart from, or in addition to, the reasons given above.

But Jesus, still speaking on the theme of enmity, went on with his discourse, as reported by Matthew:

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven."[11]

Here again is presented an extreme contrast in order to impress upon his hearers the central idea that it is love rather than hate that should actuate human conduct. And "love" in this

[10]Luke 6:31.
[11]Matt. 5:43-45.

instance may be properly interpreted not as a tender affection such as may be applied to family connections or the relations of close friendship, but as an invincible good will.

In the main the teachings of Jesus manifest a common sense amounting to genius; a rare gift of discernment between the true and the false, between the genuine and the sham; a crystal clearness of expression as well as of conception that makes the most profound truths extremely simple. The ideas of God, before him and since, have been so enveloped in metaphysical abstraction as to be beyond the reach of ordinary understanding, or else so burdened with imaginative detail as to conceal the realities of deity. A child can understand the God of Jesus, and yet the idea of God which he presented is so comprehensive, so sweeping, that the profoundest philosophy may find room within it. It was, in short, a practical God that he revealed, a God with whom men could co-operate, and whose ends could be furthered by human effort, a God who needs mankind because love must have an object, and upon whom mankind may depend as a source of strength, comfort, and inspiration.

So, too, the teachings of Jesus as to God's will as to the conduct of man in relation to his fellows are at once simple and profound, as they are illustrated in his pellucid parables and in the generality of his sayings. They are simple because they clearly define the elementals of righteous conduct as being such as would be prompted by a spirit of good will and scrupulous fairness under any circumstances, and they are profound because they comprehend the essentials of ideal human relations. He set high standards but they are not above the possibility of practical application. This being true of his teachings as a whole, we misjudge him and wrong him when we take literally sayings of his in which he expressed the oriental temperament and custom in the figurative terms that he often used, and thereby make him appear to be an impractical dreamer. "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you." That in a single sentence embodied the gist of his ethical teachings, and it unquestionably is not the utterance of a visionary but of a sage.

Finally, it is to be observed the ethics of Jesus contemplated no coercion. Anyone might or might not comply with them. It is true that in enunciating them he spoke in positive, mandatory terms "as one having authority," but he always left the way open for complete freedom of decision and action. He who was first to recognize the divinity within man, the sanctity and dignity of human personality, had too much respect for it to restrict its liberty of conscience and of choice. "We take it for granted that man should be cajoled, argued with, criticized, coerced, that any exploitation or regimenting is justified if it be for the man's own good as we conceive it, or for the general welfare, or for our own ends. He refused once and for all to infringe the sacred privilege of rejection that men if they are to be men must exercise. To him, as surely to God, there is that in man which must not be forced nor bribed, even to save him from disaster or damnation."[12] Jesus laid down an elementary code of ethics, but no means of enforcing it. Nor did he sanction enforcement. He plainly taught that no one could be made truly righteous by law. One could by coercion be made to put on a superficial crust of piety but it would be a sham. Righteousness was an inward goodness which no law could touch. "Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me,"[13] he said. "Whosoever will!" It was a matter for individual decision. And again he said, "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man which built his house upon a rock," and "every one that heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man which built his house upon the sand." Anyone was free to build either upon rock or upon sand. But he who built upon rock had solid foundations for life and eternity, while he who built upon sand doomed his edifice to destruction, not by any mandate, earthly or heavenly, but by his own foolishness.

[12]Craven, Jesus and the Gospel of Love, p. 270.
[13]Mark 8:34.

Chapter XXI

THE MIRACLES OF JESUS

Luke says that "Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit [from the wilderness of temptation] into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about."[1] It will be recalled that all of the Gospels report that at his baptism the "Spirit" descended upon Jesus in the form of a dove. Mark and John refer to it simply as "the Spirit," Matthew calls it "the Spirit of God" and Luke "the Holy Ghost." All these terms have the same meaning and refer to a long established belief among the Jews that God occasionally endowed certain men with divine inspiration and power through what was frequently termed the Holy Spirit. "The Spirit," that is to say, whatever the verbal form given to the idea, always referred to a specific and definite emanation from the deity.

It was obviously the conviction of the Gospel writers that it was this divine endowment that enabled Jesus to perform the numerous miracles which they record in their chronicles. The Gospel of Mark is devoted largely to these wonder works, most of which are recounted in Matthew and Luke together with additional ones. Comparatively few are reported in John.

These miracles present serious difficulties to the modern mind. The advancement of science and the dissemination of scientific information as to the extent and character of natural forces have created a widespread skepticism as to any recorded phenomena that transcend or seem to transcend the limitations of such forces. There are therefore a great many, even among the devout, who regard the scriptural accounts of miraculous occurrences as being upon much the same level as the fairy tales of their childhood.

The increasing prevalence of this attitude cannot be ignored in any unbiased and rational study of the personality and significance of Jesus. Nor, on the other hand, can the passages of

[1]Luke 4:14.

the Gospels dealing with the miracles be ignored. They are integral elements of the records, so interwoven with the facts that are seldom, and never successfully, questioned, that they cannot be summarily dismissed as utterly unworthy of credence. Jesus is a historical character, not a myth. That he lived in the time he is said to have lived, that he died upon the cross as he is said to have died, and that the Christian religion was founded upon his personality and his teachings are facts too well established to be open to any reasonable doubt. Nor can it be doubted that the Gospels as a whole present a very clear picture of him and a faithful presentation of his character and principles. It is plain that each one of these writers endeavored conscientiously to give a truthful account of the acts and words of Jesus and of the events attending his active mission, however they may differ in their methods and in their points of view. That they dealt with the miracles with the same integrity as with their other materials must therefore be assumed. We cannot doubt that they believed they were telling the truth about them.

Let us then begin the consideration of this difficult problem with this assumption, that the Gospel writers wrote what they believed to be true. In the day in which they lived, belief in the miraculous, in the supernatural, was universal. The Greeks and Romans as well as the Jews regarded the intervention of the gods in human affairs as too well established to be seriously questioned, and did not doubt that men were often endowed with extraordinary powers that enabled them to work miracles. Pagan writers from Homer onward mingle the supernatural with the natural without strain on the credulity of their readers. Tacitus, for example, describes the restoration of the sight of a blind man and the healing of the lame hand of another by Vespasian, which he says was well attested.[2]

There was thus for the Gospel writers no background of doubt as to the possibility of miraculous occurrences, nor even of doubts as to the credibility of reports of miracles when they appeared to be well authenticated. In their narratives they accepted accounts of events that came to them from what they were con-

[2]Historiae, 4-81.

vinced were reliable sources and incorporated them in their records as veritable history. There is also to be considered the probability that in the original accounts, whether they were the oral recollections of eyewitnesses or written documents, and also in the Gospel reproductions of them, the oriental tendency to overstatement, heretofore discussed, was more or less manifested. Moreover, the Gospel writings centered upon the figure of one whom the authors profoundly believed to be endowed with supernatural powers through the medium of the Holy Spirit, and they were naturally disposed to emphasize the possession of such powers in their accounts of his ministry. They obviously regarded the miracles as essential proofs of this endowment.

But conceding the existence and the power of all of these influences upon the minds of the writers, it seems clear, nevertheless, that they must have had substantial grounds for these accounts. Whatever the differences in their viewpoints or their didactic purposes, these men plainly endeavored to present veracious chronicles, and whatever personal embellishments they may have seen fit to give to their narratives it is inconceivable that they did not have an underlying basis of fact. Jesus must have done many things that the people regarded as marvelous. His "works" entered largely into the impress that he made upon the public. It is difficult to believe that he could have aroused the attention and attracted the following which he did by his words alone, appealing though they were to the intelligence and the finer emotions. Nor was the proclamation of the coming of the Kingdom of God by a Galilean carpenter, electrifying though it was to national expectancy, sufficient to account for the multitudes that constantly beset him. It was Jesus, the healer, the wonder worker, whom they so ardently sought. If the miracles are deleted from the Gospel records, that which is left does not sufficiently account for the rapid and dramatic events of the brief period of his ministry, and the historical perspective of the chronicles is distorted. The life of Jesus must be studied within the atmosphere of his time, and the Gospel narratives would not be true to the time if the miraculous occurrences described in them were eliminated to suit modern notions.

That Jesus performed miracles was not denied by his fiercest opponents. "The scribes which came down from Jerusalem," says Mark, "said, He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils,"[3] by which they referred to his healing of those afflicted with mental or nervous diseases, commonly attributed to "possession by demons." The Pharisees made similar charges (Matthew 9:34 and 12:24). That is to say, they admitted the deeds but claimed that the power to do them came from Satanic sources and not from heaven. Moreover, the Talmud, in one of its few references to Jesus, presents evidence of the same nature. "He hath practiced sorcery and beguiled and led astray Israel," it says.[4] To practice sorcery was to work magic by means of evil spirits. This indicates that the memory of Jesus was preserved in the Jewish tradition antagonistic to him because he was the cause of the great schism in Judaism, and that he was remembered primarily as a magician.

There can be no doubt then that Jesus was looked upon as a "doer of wonderful works," to use the expressive phrase in the much debated passage from Josephus. Must it be assumed, therefore, that he actually did all of the things he is reported to have done, or that they were done precisely as the records state? As to the latter, there are differences in the records themselves. For example, Mark speaks of the healing of blind Bartimeus as Jesus went out of Jericho on the way to Jerusalem,[5] while Matthew says two blind men were healed at that time.[6] Indeed, in many of the accounts of the miracles there are differences of detail. Again there is the probability that some occurrences were regarded as miraculous that were in fact but coincidences of natural happenings. The stilling of the tempest may be an instance of this. Violent storms arise and end with great suddenness on Lake Galilee, it is said. When Washington's forces on Long Island were attacked by Howe with a much superior army, a heavy fog enabled the American commander to withdraw his troops from the island without the loss of a man.

[3]Mark 3:22.
[4]Klausner, Jesus of Nazareth, p. 27.
[5]Mark 10:46-52.
[6]Matthew 20:29-34.

But for the happy aid of nature he might have suffered a crushing defeat there. "It was a miracle of good fortune,"[7] says a conservative historian, and many Americans regarded it as an instance of divine interposition. Not a few of the occurrences in the Old Testament recorded as miracles are explainable as coincidences of natural forces.

Furthermore, it is quite possible that something Jesus said was turned by repetition from mouth to mouth before it reached the Gospel reporters, into something that Jesus did. Take, for example—and it is perhaps the only example—the fig tree that, according to Mark and Matthew, was cursed by Jesus because it bore no fruit, and it at once withered away. Now at the time this miracle is said to have occurred, just before the Passover, it was not the season for the fruitage of the fig. Mark plainly says so. When Jesus came to the fig tree, he says, "He found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet."[8] It is difficult to believe that Jesus could have cursed a fig tree because it was not in fruit when it was not the fruiting season. Such an act was not in keeping with the character of Jesus, and it had neither real nor symbolical value. Luke, however, reports a parable of a barren fig tree, wherein the owner of a vineyard said to the "dresser" of his vineyard, "Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?"[9] The situation here is much the same as in the reported miracle, but there is reason and meaning in the parable. It seems quite probable, therefore, that this miracle did not occur and that it was a distortion of the parable, recorded in good faith by Mark, and reproduced from Mark by Matthew.

Most of the miracles attributed to Jesus were performed to relieve the afflictions of those who pressed themselves upon his attention. He was moved with compassion by their sufferings. He wanted to help them. And he knew that he had the power within himself to help them, if they had the faith in him that

[7] Caldwell, History of the American People, Vol. I, p. 176.
[8] Mark 11:13.
[9] Luke 13:7.

he regarded essential. Over and over again the necessity of faith was emphasized by him. There had to be an unquestioning, undoubting receptivity on their part. That, as we have said, was not a difficult attitude in that day, as it is in this. No one doubted the possibility of supernatural aid in the healing of disease or the restoration of lost physical or mental faculties. Doubt arose only as to the *bona fides* of the healer.

It is not necessary to assume that the works of this character were necessarily supernatural, as the people of that time universally did. We know much more today about the power of the mind over the body than they did then, much more, indeed, than we knew fifty or even twenty years ago. The treatment of disease by psychological processes, psychotherapy, has become a recognized department of scientific medicine. And it is a well-established fact that faith in the treatment and the physician is a powerful influence toward recovery. Moreover, there is ample evidence that faith in a divine source of healing power does often even in this modern day work positive cures of certain types of disease. Christian Science has demonstrated remarkable efficacy to the satisfaction of hundreds of thousands of intelligent people, and case records of many cures at such shrines as those of Lourdes and St. Anne de Beaupre have stood the tests of scientific investigation. It has also been put beyond doubt that certain personalities or certain unusual qualities of personality may often manifest a peculiar power over disease, particularly so when the one afflicted is, or is made by emotional circumstances, receptive to such influence.

Of course none of this was known in the time of Jesus, and many phenomenal occurrences were unquestionably accepted as miraculous which now could be attributed to the operation of natural forces. A large proportion of the cures worked by Jesus, as recorded in the Gospels, were upon persons afflicted with mental or nervous diseases of the kind most susceptible to influence by psychological processes. It was commonly believed that such diseases were caused by evil spirits taking possession of the afflicted one's mind, and that only a superior supernatural power could drive out these demons and heal the victim. The preva-

lence of this superstition accounts for the formula used by Jesus in healing these persons, and also for the prominence given such cases in the Gospel records. They were believed to be peculiarly important evidences of the possession by Jesus of extraordinary divine power, because they demonstrated, as the reporters and the people generally were convinced, his command over supernatural agencies of evil. Yet in the light of modern science there can be no doubt that in them natural psychological forces were operating under the most favorable circumstances, circumstances, indeed, that it would be impossible to duplicate in this age. For here was a man of strongly and powerfully magnetic personality operating among a people whose naturally warm emotions were aroused and intensified by the social and political conditions of the time and its vivid expectancies, and where there was entirely lacking any doubt as to the possibility of supernatural intervention. For these reasons many of the miracles can be regarded as true without straining one's credulity over the problem of the supernatural.

However, there are other miracles recorded that do not yield to such considerations as these. The feeding of the five thousand, whatever reasonable allowance may be made for exaggeration (and the even number suggests that it is not a precise figure but an estimate), is not explainable by any natural law we know anything about, assuming that it is substantially true. Nor can one account for the raisings of the dead by any psychological analogies. There are healings of lepers, of persons born blind, and others that present no less difficult problems to the realist. But it does not follow that they are, therefore, untrue. There is much that we know that is not explainable. No one has ever found an explanation for life, yet there is nothing more certain than its existence. Science is constantly enlarging the domain of nature and revealing new forces. Those mysterious sources of power that now make the radio one of the most familiar objects throughout the world were unknown but a few years ago, yet they must have always existed. So there may be, and always have been, other forces in nature that could have been exercised

under peculiar circumstances to accomplish results reported in these records, without any violation of natural laws.

However that may be, what is contended here is not that all the miracles are true, or that any of them occurred precisely as reported, but that there must have been substantial foundation in fact, in the veritable acts of Jesus, for their inclusion in the records of the public career of Jesus, and for the important place given to them in these records. Nor can the possibility of the supernatural be lightly dismissed, even in this age. It cannot be ruled out entirely without ruling out God, which no religion can permit, and it will be discussed in some detail in the closing section of this book.

But there is another aspect of the miracles that needs to be considered in any study of the Gospels. They are an essential factor in the delineation of the character of Jesus. Leave out the miracles and while we have left much that Jesus said, indeed everything he said that has come down to us in records of recognized authenticity, we have left very little that he did. In what remains we can, to be sure, discern the outlines of an impressive drama, of a dauntless soul marching steadily forward to a tragic end, but we would have only the barest glimpses of the life that Jesus lived in his intimate relations with humanity, of those qualities of sympathy and pity and tenderness, which have so endeared him to mankind. For it is in his ministrations to the afflicted, his unfailing help to those in need, his constant kindliness of manner and deed, that these qualities are so clearly and impressively revealed. It was mainly in them that he proved that he lived as he had taught, that love and forgiveness and charity and helpfulness were in him not merely beautiful ideas, but actual and sustaining practices.

Chapter XXII

JESUS AND THE PHARISEES

Jesus was a Jew. And he was a Palestinian, an oriental, Jew of the first century. It is important to keep this fact, and this setting, in mind, if we are to understand him. As a man among men he must be viewed amid the circumstances, the prevailing conditions and ideas, of his time. It was his Jewish background, his Jewish faith, his Jewish ideals, and his Jewish temperament, that made him and his mission possible. From no other soil could such a personality, with such a religion, and such a spiritual vision, have sprung.

And he was a loyal Jew. From his birth to his death he was a true son of Israel, faithful to its best traditions, faithful to its fundamental principles, and to its sacred institutions. He was brought up in the atmosphere of the synagogue, and more or less imbued with its Pharisaic teachings. He venerated the Law, the written Law, as the sacred foundation of the faith of Israel, and paid respect to its prescriptions. "Think not that I am come to destroy the Law or the prophets," he said, "I am not come to destroy but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled,"[1] which meant the same as if he had said not even the dotting of an i or the crossing of a t would be erased from the Law until it was fulfilled. And to a leper whom he had healed he said, "See thou say nothing to any man: but go thy way, show thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them."[2]

He was devoted to the temple and its sacrificial ceremonies. The well-known incident, commonly referred to as "the cleansing of the temple," grew out of the indignation of Jesus at the profanation of the precincts of the holy place by the commercial

[1]Matt. 5:18.
[2]Mark 1:44.

transactions—those of the money changers and the lucrative trade in animals for sacrifice—within the Court of the Gentiles. "It is written," said Jesus to these traders, "My house shall be called the house of prayer but ye have made it a den of thieves."[3] It was in defense of its sanctity that he drove them out. This was indirectly a criticism of the priests who permitted such profanation and profited by it, but nowhere does Jesus say a word in specific disparagement of the priests or the priestly system. His reference to the priest and the Levite in the parable of the Good Samaritan is sometimes interpreted as a reflection upon the priestly caste, but more likely he used them to symbolize what was theoretically the highest in Judaism in contrast with the despised Samaritan. Doubtless he heartily disapproved of the private conduct of the ruling priests, their pride, their worldliness, their ostentation, but the fact remains that he did not condemn them, not even when they manifested their animosity toward him and demanded his execution, except as condemnation may be implied in the cleansing incident, which even at that was a reflection upon their management of the temple precincts and not upon their holy office as ministers of the altar.

Nor did Jesus at any time contemplate the destruction of Judaism. Quite the contrary, he sought to reform and to glorify it. The Kingdom of God was first of all for the Jews, and it was the Jews whom he was endeavoring to save by showing them the way to enter the kingdom. All his preaching, all his teaching, was to and among the Jews. His ministry did not touch except occasionally and incidentally upon the Gentiles. "I am not sent," he said, "but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel."[4] Whatever he may have thought of the inclusion of Gentiles in the kingdom—and we have discussed this at some length in a previous chapter—his work and his immedate purposes were confined to the Jews. Jesus was from first to last a loyal, and in the spiritual sense a patriotic, Israelite. How then did he come into collision with the religious leaders of his race?

[3]Matt. 21:13.
[4]Matt. 15:24.

The importance attached to the Law, the written Law, in the religious life of the Jews cannot be overstated. Not only religious life but social, civil, and political life were based upon it. Next to God himself it was revered, for every word of it was devoutly believed to have come from God. And the ultimate salvation of Israel was believed to depend upon strict conformity with the letter of this Law. Even the Sadducees, and all others who were least scrupulous in its observance, regarded this as a fundamental principle of their racial faith. And because its prescriptions applied in many ways to the daily life of the people a general knowledge of the Law was held to be essential to that final ascendancy which all anticipated.

It was this, as we have seen, that led to the institution of the synagogues, of the schools, and to the development of the Holy Scriptures. It also led to the development of the scribes as interpreters of the Law, and of the Pharisees as its guardians. The scribes not only interpreted the Law but gave official sanction to traditional customs. Thus under the influence of their authority there gradually came into existence a great body of unwritten, or oral, regulations, supplementary to the written Law, which acquired much the same force as the sacred statutes. Indeed, in the course of time, this oral law came to be regarded as also emanating from God, and to be little if any less holy. The Sadducees, to be sure, rejected this notion, and doubtless many others questioned its validity, but in general it was at least tacitly accepted. The scribes, as the chief teachers and expounders of the Law, naturally impressed this view, which they held themselves, upon the people. And in this they had the full support of the Pharisees who made it their particular task to promote compliance with the oral law.

The labors of the scribes in the interpretation of the written Law resulted in a vast expansion of the simple terms of the Torah into a highly complicated structure of minute rules. For example, regarding the sabbath the Law says merely that no work should be done on that day. With the exception that in one place it commands that no fires shall be kindled,[5] it presents

[5] Exodus 35:3.

no specific regulations. But what constitutes work, in the meaning of the Law? It seemed to these interpreters highly important that work should be explicitly defined, particularly so in view of the extreme sanctity of the sabbath. This determination led ultimately to the establishment of no less than thirty-nine classes of work prohibited on the sabbath, and each of these classes was divided and subdivided into numerous specific rules.

The effect of such concentration upon the minutiae of law was inevitably to give undue emphasis to compliance with such regulations, and in effect to make them of more importance than the essential principles and precepts of genuine religious conduct. It was to these relative trivialities of Pharisaic formalism that Jesus strongly objected. And it was mainly because he declined to conform to the microscopic scrupulosity of these rules that the Pharisees condemned him. While there can be no doubt that Jesus venerated the sabbath as sincerely as they, he had no patience with the petty rules that so rigidly restricted action on the sabbath that one could not even help the sick, except where it was immediately essential to save a life, on that day, nor pluck a single head of grain from a field of wheat. "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath,"[6] Jesus told them sternly, when they protested against his conduct, and that of his disciples. Of course he was right, but the saying was highly displeasing to the scribes and Pharisees who heard him.

Moreover, they were displeased because Jesus did not hold himself aloof from the common people as they did. Jesus had set himself up as a teacher. There was no objection to that. Indeed, the idea of teaching was fundamental in the development of Judaism, as we have seen. But the teacher to have their approval had to be strictly orthodox, in accord with their conception of orthodoxy, which emphasized adherence to the minute regulations of the oral law as of no less importance than adherence to the prescriptions of the written Law. And he was expected to avoid contamination from the vulgar herd, as they avoided it, by scrupulous separateness. The great majority of the people were "ignorant of the Law" from the standpoint of

[6]Mark 2:27.

the scribes and Pharisees, and they gave to them the contemptuous term "am-ha-aretz," the people of the land, the common people, yet most of these people no doubt were pious Jews who could not comply with the innumerable rules laid down by the scribes and Pharisees because no one could know them all and understand them without devoting one's life to the study of them, as did these exemplars. Jesus disdained this exclusiveness. He mingled freely with "publicans and sinners," and on the friendliest of terms, saying with unanswerable logic, "They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I am come not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."[7]

Again, Jesus did not attach the importance to ritual ablutions and fasting that the Pharisees did. The Mosaic law did not prescribe ceremonial hand or foot washings except for priests in connection with the temple services. But the scribes and Pharisees with their strong propensity for ritual formalism had extended the prescription to apply to all persons, or at least to themselves and to all others who presumed to be teachers. Similarly with their disposition to asceticism, they practiced fasting themselves and regarded it as distinctive of a superior devotion to religion in all others who imitated them in this particular.

Jesus did not fast, nor did he instruct his disciples to fast. The Pharisees complained of this, saying, "Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not?" To which Jesus answered, "Can the children of the bridechamber fast while the bridegroom is with them?" referring to a ruling of the Pharisees themselves that the bridegroom and his attendants were exempt from the obligations of prayer and the wearing of phylacteries during the seven days of the wedding feast, and of course from such observances as fasting.[8] Jesus thus implied that he was the bridegroom, heralding the coming of the kingdom, which was occasion for rejoicing and for feasting rather than for fasting. So also as to the ceremonial ablutions, the hand washings, the Pharisees and scribes asked him, "Why walk

[7]Mark 2:17.
[8]Klausner, Jesus of Nazareth, pp. 274, 275.

not thy disciples according to the traditions of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands?" In reply to this Jesus rebuked them, charging them with neglecting the commandments of God while they devoted themselves to the traditions of men. And he said to the people about him with the preliminary earnest admonition to attention, "Hearken unto me every one of you, and understand. There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things that come out of him, those are they that defile the man."[9] To his disciples he explained that man could be defiled only by the evil things that come out of the heart, the thoughts and acts that are wicked.

The objections of the scribes and the Pharisees to the conduct of Jesus seem to us to be strangely trivial, altogether superficial. As a matter of fact, the differences between them and Jesus related to fundamental principles. They were the differences between the religion of the letter, legalism, and the religion of the spirit. The rules, referred to in the Gospels as the "traditions of the elders," rested upon the conception of the holiness of the Law, and the obligation of every Jew to comply with its provisions as they were interpreted by the scribes and taught by the Pharisees. Upon the theory that these innumerable supplementary rules, as well as the written Law itself, emanated from God, there could be little distinction in the importance attached to them. Therefore that which seemed trivial or even meaningless was to be obeyed with as scrupulous exactness as that of manifestly great significance because all, the small as well as the large, were divinely ordained. So believing, it was impossible for the scribes and Pharisees to escape the conclusion that anyone who taught that even the least of these regulations could be rightly ignored was undermining the very foundations of their faith, and could not be permitted to continue such teaching. They were not singular in this. The same intolerance, arising from much the same legalism, the same attachment to the letter as distinguished from the spirit, has been manifested by other peoples in other ages, and always attended by the urge to persecution.

[9] Mark 7:14, 15.

The teaching of Jesus, therefore, was essentially incompatible with the teachings of the scribes and the Pharisees. They held that righteousness consisted in strict compliance with the Law and with the minute regulations which grew out of the interpretations of the Law, priding themselves upon their superior righteousness because of their own precise conformity with such prescriptions. Jesus, on the other hand, held that righteousness was a matter of the heart, of love for God and fellow-men, and conduct in harmony with such love. While he also venerated the written Law, and did not wholly reject the oral law, he by his teachings made both codes of secondary importance, to be respected and observed as means to an end, but to be disregarded or opposed when they became obstacles to the attainment of that end, which was the true righteousness that alone could inherit the kingdom. "I say unto you," he said in the Sermon on the Mount, "that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."[10]

This to these self-constituted, but long established and popularly esteemed, exemplars of piety, who considered themselves the most righteous among all the righteous, was an intolerable reflection upon their class. But Jesus saw in them, and in their insistence upon observance of the infinite details of their regulations as essential to righteousness, the chief obstacle to the success of his mission. And when they thrust themselves in his path he did not hesitate to attack them with the utmost vigor, although he fully realized their power to encompass his destruction. The conception of a "gentle Jesus, meek and mild" has been stressed far too much in Christian literature. To be sure, he was all of that in his ordinary moments, but when he was aroused, when the work he had set out to accomplish was imperiled by opposition, he was a spiritual warrior, strong and fearless, giving his Pharisaic opponents blow for blow, refusing to yield an inch to them, and overcoming them in every verbal encounter. They aroused his feelings, his indignation, as did no

[10]Matthew 5:20.

others, and his excoriations of them are matchless in the literature of invective. And yet, led it be said again, it was the regeneration of Judaism, not its destruction, that he sought. It was not the Law or the prophets that he combated. On the contrary he was himself a prophet of Israel, condemning as the older prophets had done the emptiness and uselessness and harmfulness of ceremonials and regulations that did not contribute to those inner relations with God that alone constitute real religion. Being a loyal Jew he must have felt that the written Law in general, and even most of the oral law, did contribute to such relations, since as a rule he respected and observed both the written and the oral codes. It was the excessive formalism of the scribes and Pharisees, their emphasis upon material trivialities and the consequent depreciation of "weightier matters" that he strenuously opposed.

Obviously the difference was vital. And it is no less obvious that if Jesus had conformed to their prescriptions he would have been but another scribe and would have been lost to the world. On the other hand, it is probable that if the Jews as a whole had accepted his teachings and thereby rejected the teachings of the scribes and the Pharisees, Judaism as such would have disappeared, absorbed in a universal religion, and the racial solidarity of the Jews, dependent as it was upon the separateness and exclusiveness which Judaism rigidly maintained, would have vanished. For there was that in the teachings of Jesus that could not be confined within the framework of Judaism—fundamental principles that were applicable to all humanity, and for which, as subsequent events proved, all mankind hungered. Whether Jesus was conscious of it or not, he was laying the foundations of a religion that could not be restricted to geographical or racial limitations.

"Pharisaism," says a Jewish authority, "shaped the character of Judaism and the life and thought of the Jew for all the future. True, it gave the Jewish religion a legalistic tendency and made 'separatism' its chief characteristic, yet only thus were the pure monotheistic faith, the ethical ideal, and the intellectual

and spiritual character of the Jew preserved in the midst of the downfall of the old world and the deluge of barbarism which swept over the medieval world."[11] No doubt that is a true statement. The Pharisees are not to be judged wholly by the circumstances that brought them into conflict with Jesus, and we have in a previous chapter given credit to their constructive influence in the development and maintenance of Judaism. But it is nonetheless true that their predominant ideas and purposes of legalism and separatism made them intuitively antagonistic to the inherent universalism in the teachings of Jesus.

At any rate, they opposed him, and his heresies attained such importance in their eyes that scribes and Pharisees came into Galilee from Jerusalem, to give the greater weight of their influence to his suppression. Jesus had been highly successful in his preaching and healing ministry for many months—just how long cannot be determined from the Gospel narratives, but evidently more than a year and possibly two or even three. Crowds had flocked about him constantly, wherever he went, attracted by his works, his words, and doubtless no less by his vibrant and radiant personality. For a time he had been welcomed in the synagogues, those centers of Pharisaism, and whether he spoke in them, in the city streets, among the hills or on the lake shore, the "common people heard him gladly." It was the bright and shining and joyous period of his public career. But gradually the criticism of the orthodox religious leaders became definitely centered upon him, strengthened and embittered by his fearless defiance of them, until at last, as Mark tells us, the Pharisees "took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him."[12] Matthew says "the Pharisees went out and held a counsel against him, how they might destroy him."[13] In both statements something in the nature of a conspiracy is implied, and while these provincial Pharisees did not accomplish his destruction they apparently made it impracticable for Jesus to continue his public ministry in Galilee.

[11]Jewish Encyclopedia, Vol. IX, p. 666.
[12]Mark 3:6.
[13]Matt. 12:14.

Chapter XXIII

ON THE ROAD TO JERUSALEM

It is impossible to trace with any precision the course of events narrated in the Synoptic Gospels. Each of the three books is made up of disconnected or loosely connected episodes or sayings that are arranged by each writer in such sequence as he sees fit, because, in the first place, the material with which they worked doubtless came to them or to earlier collectors in more or less detached fragments, without dates, and often with no information to indicate just where or when an event transpired; and, in the second place, because they were more concerned in bringing together all the facts and illuminating them than in composing biographies in systematic order. "In fact, none of the Gospels can be relied upon for chronological order. They are all dominated by didactic considerations which make the topical order prevail over the chronological."[1]

Nevertheless it is evident, from all of them, that there came a time in the mission of Jesus when the pressure of opposition from the scribes and Pharisees, and the growing uneasiness of Herod made it necessary to terminate his work in Galilee. Apparently he did not withdraw abruptly from his home province. He seems to leave and return several times. But one gathers the impression that these return visits were brief and primarily in the process of preparation for the final abandonment of Galilee. We find him first journeying into the pagan country of Phoenicia. As Mark tells it, "He arose and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into an house, and would have no man know it, but he could not be hid."[2] It was there and then that he responded so generously to the appeal of the Syro-Phoenician woman in behalf of her child. But he was obviously for the moment in retreat from his enemies and doubtless seeking rest before going on with his work in other fields.

[1] Briggs, New Light on the Life of Jesus, p. 8.
[2] Mark 7:24.

Again following Mark's account, we see him apparently crossing northern Galilee in order to descend to the eastern shore of the lake, outside the domain of Herod. From here he crossed the lake for a hurried visit "into the parts of Dalmanutha," as Mark expresses it, "into the coasts of Magdala," says Matthew. "Dalmanutha" may have been another name for Magdala, or they may have been separate towns. Authorities differ and with all of them it is a matter of conjecture. Nothing is definitely known of Dalmanutha. However, it matters little. Both statements imply that Jesus merely entered the outskirts of the town. But whatever his purpose in crossing—the Gospels do not reveal it—he encountered the scribes and Pharisees again, and he returned to the east side of the lake. We next hear of him at Bethsaida, outside the Galilean territory of Herod Antipas. And from thence he and his disciples take that memorable journey northward to Caesarea Philippi, which was to mark the beginning of the end.

At the northern limit of Palestine stands Mount Hermon like a mighty sentinel, its snow-crowned summit visible from any point in the land where the view is not impeded by intervening heights. From the base of this mountain flows a copious spring which is one of the sources of the Jordan. A cave near this spring was anciently regarded as sacred to the god Pan and the place was a center of worship for that nature-deity and thereby derived its name, Paneas. Long before that, before the coming of Grecian religious ideas to that region, there is reason to believe that it was one of the numerous shrines of Baal, probably the Baal-gad "under Mount Hermon," mentioned in Joshua.[3] Herod had built a temple here dedicated to Augustus, and his son, Herod Philip, had expanded it into an important city, naming it Caesarea, in honor of Tiberius Caesar, with that sycophancy common to all the Herods, and by which they profited not a little. But the elder Herod had previously built an imposing city on the seacoast of Judea, naming it Caesarea as a tribute to Augustus, and in order to distinguish Philip's city from that of his father it became known as Caesarea Philippi.

[3] 11:17.

Here at this point then was a very ancient center of religion. Baal, to be sure, had long since vanished, but Pan was still worshiped, and here the new emperor worship just coming into existence had one of its sources in the fulsome flattery of Herod. Why did Jesus journey with his disciples to this northern outpost of Palestine? Was he moved at all by the religious associations of the place? Probably not, but it is an impressive coincidence that here at this sanctuary representative of ancient and modern paganism he who was to displace and supersede all the cults of his time should begin his march to the Cross and to Victory. "Who can forbear to wonder at that strange scene where a Jewish carpenter gathered his few disciples on the flank of Hermon within sight of the temple of Augustus? . . . How incredible it would have seemed then to think that the man from Galilee, sitting there with his few disciples, would gather to himself all the ascriptions of divinity that clothed Augustus and much more besides, until his temples would outstrip the emperors, and his influence make all that Augustus ever did seem small by comparison."[4]

Probably Jesus, having already made up his mind to go to Jerusalem for the Passover, brought his disciples to this comparatively remote spot, where they would be beyond the reach of Herod Antipas, and relatively free from the opposition of the scribes and Pharisees, for the population here was largely gentile, in order to prepare them for the final journey and its tragic termination. At any rate it was here, or near here, that he propounded to them for the first time the crucial question, "Whom do men say that I am?" Perhaps most of them had not thought of him as other than Jesus of Nazareth, a wonderful teacher and healer, whom they followed because they revered and loved him. But they answered that they had heard people speak of him as John the Baptist, or Elijah or as one of the prophets, indicating that some people at least saw in him a resemblance to notables of their past, although how they could identify him with John the Baptist is not easy to understand. But this no doubt was merely the result of the wonder he aroused

[4]Harry Emerson Fosdick, A Pilgrimage to Palestine, pp. 215, 216.

in many minds, and Jesus had put the question to the disciples only to set them to thinking and as a prelude to the more direct and important question, "Whom say *ye* that I am?" Apparently not one of them had an answer to this question save Peter. It had never occurred to them, his most intimate companions, that he was other than he seemed, although they had heard others venture suggestions that might have awakened speculation in their own minds. But Peter evidently had somehow arrived at a conviction. "Thou art the Christ," the Messiah, he promptly said. So Mark records it. According to Matthew he said, "Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God," and Luke has it that he answered "The Christ of God"—all, however, meaning the same thing, the declaration by Peter of the belief that Jesus was the long expected Messiah.

If, as it is to be reasonably inferred, this was a new idea to the disciples one can imagine their astonishment when Jesus gave them to understand that Peter had discerned the truth. Their failure to perceive it is not surprising. The traditional idea of the Messiah was that of a splendorous being, a divinely commissioned and divinely led warrior, who would bring all the nations to the feet of Yahweh, and set up a throne from which he would rule the world as the vicegerent of the God of Israel. He was to be, it is true, a human being, however supernaturally endowed, and would arise from among their number. But certainly this young carpenter of Nazareth did not look or act as the Messiah of popular vision was expected to look and act. Moreover, he and they were at the moment so far from assuming any physical leadership that they were in a sense fugitives, seeking at any rate to avoid detention by the political and religious authorities of Galilee by removal beyond their reach. This is explainable by the determination of Jesus to meet his fate not in Galilee but in Jerusalem, but this the disciples did not yet know.

That Jesus had given them no previous intimation of his own conviction that he was the Messiah is proved by what he said to Peter, according to the record of Matthew: "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto

thee, but my Father which is in heaven."[5] Peter, that is to say, could not have known that Jesus was the Messiah unless it had been revealed to him by God. All the Synoptic Gospels agree as to this incident, and it is clear from their accounts that it was here and at this time, just before he started on his last journey to Jerusalem, that Jesus for the first time made known to them his divine appointment. One who now reads the records, in the light of subsequent events, can discern there evidences that he himself was sure of his mission from the beginning, but obviously these evidences, veiled and indirect as they were, made no such impression upon the disciples.

Apparently, however, they accepted the revelation without question, for there is no intimation of dissent from any of them. Certainly anything was possible to this man who had displayed such wondrous power before their eyes, whose words seemed to express conceptions of holiness even greater than those of the prophets, and whom they had followed so devotedly. Nevertheless they must have been astonished by this information. And they were further amazed, and also bewildered, when he cautioned them to reveal his identity to no one and told them he was going to Jerusalem to die. "The Son of man," he said, "must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again." How could this be? What was a Messiah for if not to raise Israel to material power and glory? And how, in the name of all that was holy, could this, or any part of this, be accomplished by a dying and defeated Messiah? What did he mean? And what in particular did he mean by dying and rising again? If they knew anything of the "suffering servant" prophecy of Isaiah upon which the course of Jesus was being shaped, it presented to them an incomprehensible mystery. It is not difficult to imagine their perplexity.

The always outspoken Peter doubtless expressed the unuttered protest of all of them when he cried: "Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee!" Although the messianic mission of Jesus had been revealed to Peter alone, apparently he was

[5]Matt. 16:17.

as far from understanding its nature as the others. Jesus saw in the spiritual obtuseness of this his first and ablest disciple the influence of that ancient antagonist whom he had routed in the wilderness of temptation. "Get thee behind me, Satan," he said sternly to Peter, "thou art an offence to me: for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men."[6] He was not to be deterred from the course he had set for himself, or that he was convinced had been set for him, by the protests of his followers. They did not understand, until long afterward, the meaning and purpose of his mission. Nevertheless he sought, in the days immediately following, to impress upon them the certainty of the end which he faced, and that the kingdom which he had in mind and for which he was to lay down his life was not the material kingdom which his disciples as well as all other Jews anticipated. However, that it was beyond their comprehension, and that they could not believe that his predictions were to be taken literally, is obvious from their disputes among themselves over who were to have the chief posts of honor in his kingdom.[7] His patient explanation that the Kingdom of God was a kingdom of service and not a kingdom of honors and power made no impression upon them.

From Caesarea Philippi Jesus "steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem," as Luke expresses it. For "it cannot be," he said, "that a prophet perish outside of Jerusalem."[8] It was needful that his sacrifice make an impress upon the nation, and it was only in Jerusalem that it could be given the most impressive and lasting values. Jerusalem was the holy city, the sacred center of the racial religion, as well as its political, economic, and social capital. Above all it was the one place devoted to sacrifice. Here every element of the national life was represented, and here were concentrated the dignity, the wealth, and the power of the Jews, as well as the supreme authority of the Romans within the province. Moreover, the time of the Passover was at hand, that great festival which brought the Jews

[6]Matt. 16:22, 23.
[7]Mark 9:34.
[8]Luke 13:33.

in countless numbers to Jerusalem, not only from all Palestine but from all parts of the Roman world. Here were the scene, the stage settings and furniture, and the audience, for the enactment of the cosmic tragedy in which Jesus saw himself as the chief figure.

And so he "set his face" toward Jerusalem, his disciples behind him, wondering, fearing. "They were in the way going up to Jerusalem," says Mark, "and Jesus went before them. And they were amazed, and as they followed they were afraid."[9] Amazed and afraid! One can imagine that little band of Jews, trudging along the dusty highway, Jesus some distance ahead, walking alone, absorbed in his thoughts; his disciples, grouped closely together, following, their eyes fixed upon him. That strange being in front of them was the Messiah, the anointed one in whom all the hopes of Israel centered. And he had chosen them, out of all the millions of their race, to be his companions and aids. What glory should await them in such an association! Yet they had been told repeatedly that this was not a way of glory, in the sense they understood, but a way of humiliation and death. It was a bewildering paradox that filled them with amazement, and with fear. But still they followed him.

What were the thoughts of Jesus as he led them southward? His mind must have been fixed upon the events close at hand, which every step brought nearer. It seems clear that he knew the nature of his destiny, and its purpose. He knew that he was the suffering servant foretold by the prophet Isaiah, and he realized all that this identity implied. That this was so is plainly indicated by his words that refer directly to this prophecy. "The Son of man goeth as it is written of him," he said.[10] That necessarily referred to prophecy, and it could not have referred to the prophecies in Enoch and other non-scriptural writings, although it is probable that he derived his self-designation as "Son of man" from Enoch. For there was in these writings no prediction that the Messiah would go to his death as Jesus had told his disciples he was now going. The writings to which he

[9] 10:32.
[10] Mark 14:21; Matt. 26:24; Luke 22:22.

referred must have indicated such an end so clearly that Jesus had no doubt about it. "It is written of the Son of man," he said, "that he must suffer many things and be set at nought."[11] And again: "Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished."[12] At the same time he was telling them: "Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles; and they shall mock him and scourge him, and shall kill him, and the third day he shall rise again."[13] Although some of these details may have been amplified by the Gospel writer in the light of actual events, there seems no good reason to doubt that Jesus did predict that his death would be accomplished in some such manner as this, and that it would be in fulfillment of prophecy. There were no prophecies of this nature which Jesus could have had in mind save those expressed in the suffering servant prophecies of Isaiah, particularly in the fifty-third chapter. In that chapter, indeed, is comprehended virtually all that Jesus believed would come to pass, as well as those qualities that were embodied in his person. "He shall grow up before him [before God] as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground . . . He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief . . . He was oppressed and he was afflicted . . . He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter . . . He was taken from prison and from judgment . . . He was cut off out of the land of the living . . . Therefore will I divide him a portion of the great . . . because he hath poured out his soul unto death."

Those passages were incomprehensible to the Jewish interpreters save as references to Israel as a whole. But Jesus obviously saw that they referred to a person, a Messiah, and that person he was profoundly convinced was himself. With that conviction there was for him no escape from the ignominy and death which the prophecies foretold. Nor did he wish to escape. For it was

[11]Mark 9:12.
[12]Luke 18:31.
[13]Mark 10:33, 34.

evidently clear to him that the messianic plan described in these writings involved the sacrifice of his life for the redemption of his people and humanity in general. All the symbolism of the prophecy is centered upon the idea of vicarious sacrifice as a means of atonement for the sins of others. "Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. . . . He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities . . . with his stripes we are healed. . . . The Lord hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all . . . For the transgression of my people was he stricken. . . . By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities." These passages express the heart of the prophecy, the burden of its message. The Messiah in this view was to be no material, conquering hero, but a willing sacrifice for the spiritual salvation of men—a sacrifice not to appease an angry God, there is no suggestion of divine vindictiveness here; on the contrary, it implies the sacrifice of God's righteous servant, his anointed Son, as a means of opening the way by which the souls of men might be fitted for entry into the Kingdom of God. It was a procedure of love, not of hate or of vegeance. As the Gospel of John expressed it, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believed on him might not perish but have everlasting life."

That this was the conception of Jesus of the meaning of this prophecy and therefore of his own mission is indicated by his words: "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."[14] And at the last supper he said: "This is my blood of the new testament [covenant] which is shed for many,"[15] or as Matthew expresses it, "for the remission of sins." It is to be borne in mind that the idea of sacrifice was inherent in all Jewish religious thinking. Except during the Exile ritual sacrifice as an essential incident of worship had been constant for more than a thousand years, and this involved private or public offerings at a prescribed altar as a means of propitiating the deity. While offerings of vegeta-

[14]Mark 10:45.
[15]Mark 14:24.

ble products, of oil and wine, were provided for by the ritual, the most frequent, most conspicuous and most important sacrifices were those in which the blood of an animal, usually a lamb, was shed upon the altar. Sacrifices of one sort or another were, of course, common to nearly all ancient religions, but among the Jews the sacrificial system was marked by increasing spiritual symbolism in which the idea of atonement was prominent. It was the common supposition that there was a peculiar efficacy in the shedding of blood, which to the ancients was the life of the body, as a means of obtaining divine forgiveness. "It is nowhere explained why blood should atone for sin; it was a divine ordinance, and that sufficed."[16] The specific divine ordinance is found in Leviticus (17:11): "For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul." "In Mosaic ritualism," says the Jewish Encyclopedia, "the atoning blood thus actually meant the bringing about of a reunion with God, the restoration of peace between the soul and its maker."[17] The same thought is expressed in the Epistle to the Hebrews, "without shedding of blood is no remission" of sins.[18]

Whatever may have been the views of Jesus as to the temple sacrifices and their spiritual symbolism as actually practiced, it was obviously no great step from the current and long held theories of the atoning blood, to that exalted idea of the shedding of his own blood, the blood of the anointed Messiah, for the remission of the sins of men, and a "reunion with God" for the establishment of his kingdom. To be sure, it was difficult, if not impossible, to understand how such a sacrifice could have such consequences, but then it was difficult to understand how the customary shedding of blood upon the temple altars could have any such efficacy for atonement as it was generally assumed to have. As to the latter it sufficed, as stated above, that it was divinely ordained, that God himself had said that the blood did

[16]Oesterly and Robinson, "Hebrew Religion," p. 298.
[17]Vol. II, p. 276.
[18]9:22.

atone and commanded sacrifice to this and other ends. The how and why of this were therefore not to be questioned. As to the former, the sacrifice of Jesus, it was the same idea, spiritualized beyond all previous imagination save that of the Second Isaiah, and given cosmic proportions. Nor did Jesus question the how or the why of it. Through that mystical communion with God which he had maintained throughout his life and which had always governed his conduct he was convinced that his sacrifice was ordained, that he was the designated instrument for the salvation of the souls of men, and that the manner in which the sacrifice was to be made effective was in the hands of God. Incomprehensible as it might seem to others, possibly even to himself, it was the will of God, and therefore to be obeyed. That one should willingly lay down one's life for a cause, in devotion to an idea, or to save others, is not in itself strange. Human history is replete with examples of such self-sacrifice that are often the noblest adornments of its pages. It is the vastness of the objective, the mysticism of its concept, the purity and the majesty of the offering, and the unparalleled consequences of his voluntary immolation, that make it unique and supreme in the annals of human life.

We have no means of knowing what were the thoughts of Jesus on this memorable journey, but it seems a safe assumption that his mind was concentrated upon the determined sacrifice and its implications. That he was inspired by the conviction that death was not to be the end of his mission, but rather that it would be the doorway to a far greater mission, wherein he would be the victor, the true and regnant Messiah, is hardly to be doubted. His conduct as well as his words so indicate. He would die and be buried but he would rise again. That was not only the clear implication of the prophecy, but in his thinking it was obviously essential to the consummation of God's purposes with respect to himself. "Scholars have found difficulties in the prediction of Jesus that he would rise again after three days. The words 'after three days' . . . may be a Jewish idiom for 'in the future.' There is however no reason to doubt, whatever may be one's theology, that Jesus was certain that he would

rise again. Every Pharisee believed in the resurrection. Jesus' messiahship would naturally give him a more sure belief in his own resurrection. He had come into the world to fulfill God's messianic purpose—a purpose which Israel, he was convinced, sorely misunderstood. He saw death staring him in the face, but God's purpose could not be thwarted. He would rise in the future to carry on the work God had assigned him. He would survive the worst his enemies could do and would fulfill the Father's will. That is what his words mean and no one need doubt that as he bravely faced death he was sustained by this faith.'"[19]

From Caesarea Philippi to Jerusalem is not a long journey, even on foot, and could have been accomplished in a few days. One gets the impression from Mark and Matthew that it was so accomplished, because of the brevity of their narration applying to it. One gets an entirely contrary impression from Luke, who at this point enters upon the succession of nine chapters containing highly important matter not found in any of the other Gospels, notably the priceless parables of the Prodigal Son and the Good Samaritan. If all the sayings and events recorded by Luke were in fact incidents of this journey, it must have been very leisurely and consumed several weeks. But this does not necessarily follow. Luke, says Dr. Ernest Findlay Scott in a very plausible explanation of this difference from the other Gospels, "represents Jesus as slowly making his way from Galilee to Jerusalem. The impression is left on us, by this section of Luke, that a great part of Jesus' ministry came after the confession of messiahship at Caesarea Philippi, though at that point, as we gather from Mark and Matthew, the ministry was virtually closed. All that now remained for Jesus was to go up to Jerusalem and abide the consequences God might direct. Some writers, guiding themselves by Luke, have held that the messianic declaration was only the prelude to a period of further ministry, but there can be little doubt that Luke was influenced purely by literary motives. When he had brought the history of Jesus to the great turning point, he still finds himself with much

[19]Barton, Jesus of Nazareth, p. 304.

of his most precious material unused. It has come to him without any definite note of time or place, and he decides to bring it all in together at this point before he proceeds to the story of the Passion. The main drama has for the moment paused, and these chapters constitute a sort of interlude before the curtain is lifted again for the last solemn scenes.'"[20]

Whatever the explanation may be, it is beyond question that Luke by this arrangement of his material associates the journey with some of the most beautiful, moving and cogent lessons recorded in any of the Gospel writings, and envelops with a divine radiance the final pilgrimage of the Master, all of which the world would have lost if it had had to depend upon the brief and relatively stark narratives of Mark and Matthew. What we can gather from all of them, however, is that Jesus proceeded from Caesarea Philippi down through Galilee, evading there any contact with his enemies, crossed to the east side of the Jordan, journeying southward through the province of Perea, wherein although within the dominion of Herod he seems not to have been disturbed by his agents, and recrossed the river at the ford of Jericho, to enter at Jericho on the last stage of his pilgrimage to Jerusalem—and Calvary.

[20]The Literature of the New Testament, pp. 82, 83.

Chapter XXIV

THE GATHERING SHADOWS

From time immemorial the Passover had always drawn large numbers to Jerusalem, but in these days of tense feeling and high hopes the number of pilgrims was doubtless greatly augmented. The estimates of Josephus are probably exaggerated, but it is certain that vast multitudes congregated there for this hallowed occasion. And they came not merely from Palestine but from all parts of the Roman Empire. For among the millions of the Jews dispersed throughout the Roman world a pilgrimage to the Holy City for the Passover was regarded as a sacred duty which every man should at some time in his life endeavor to perform. And so each year tens of thousands of these pious exiles came from afar to join with their brethren of the homeland in this celebration of the deliverance of Israel from Egypt in the remote past of the race.

Normally Jerusalem was a crowded city, but during the Passover it must have been packed almost to the point of suffocation. No doubt every inhabitant accommodated as many guests as he could possibly find room for, but even so, many thousands must have encamped outside the walls, as in a later day the followers of Mahomet encamped about Mecca. And naturally with such dense throngs of people of the ardent oriental temperament, fired with religious zeal and patriotism, which to the Jew was one and the same thing, and with the messianic expectation aroused within them as never before, disorder marked with violence was a frequent incident. Rome watched these gatherings with a constant anxiety and took every precaution to prevent public feeling from getting out of control. The military forces were increased, and Pilate, the procurator, annually abandoned his permanent headquarters at Caesarea, on the Mediterranean coast, to take up his residence in Jerusalem, together with his subordinate officials, in order to give the weight of his presence and authority to the exercise of the power of Rome.

It was into this tumultuous gathering, this seething caldron of human emotions, that Jesus was about to enter, determined to cen-

ter public attention upon himself and to accept the dire consequences which he clearly foresaw. He had been obliged to leave Galilee, where the atmosphere was more liberal than here, because the religious leaders condemned his teachings. What could he expect but a more severe condemnation in Jerusalem, with its Pharisees more rigid and zealous, the Sadducees naturally and violently opposed to all he could offer, and Rome, which was unable to see any distinction between messianism and insurrection, prepared to strike it down ruthlessly. There is no reason to believe that he anticipated any miraculous and spectacular intervention by God in his behalf. That was not contemplated in the divine plan, as he discerned it. By his profound communion with Deity he had been totally separated from the materialistic ideas and ideals of his people, and fully realized that his mission was purely spiritual, involving his complete sacrifice as a means to the divinely determined end. And so it seems certain that when he set out from Jericho on that last stage of his journey from the foot of Mount Hermon, he had no doubt of the fate that awaited him in Jerusalem; he knew that, as he had told his disciples, he was going there to be slain.

Doubtless it was in the early morning that Jesus and his disciples set out from Jericho. While it was only about fifteen miles from Jerusalem, it involved an ascent of over 3,500 feet within that distance, from more than 1,000 feet below sea level to nearly 2,600 feet above sea level. Moreover, even at this time of the year, the early spring, it was oppressively warm and dry. "A more hot and heavy way it is impossible to conceive—between blistered limestone rocks, and in front the bare hills piled high without shadow or verdure."[1] These conditions must have made an early morning start for that journey the rule. But however early it may have been, this little group had large company. Pilgrims from all over the land were already on their way to Jerusalem and many of them were making the ascent from Jericho on that day. "He went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people,"[2] says Mark. Doubtless among these were many Galileans who knew Jesus, many perhaps who were his disciples although in a less intimate

[1]Smith, Historical Geography of the Holy Land.
[2]Mark 10:46.

way than the Twelve. And it is not improbable that some of the Twelve, despite the earlier injunction to secrecy, had imparted to others intimations of the messianic distinction which was theirs. Indeed, there is evidence that Jesus himself felt that now the time for secrecy was past; for when as they were going out of Jericho the blind beggar, Bartimeus, appealed to him for the restoration of his sight, crying out repeatedly "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me,"[3] he did not disclaim the title, although "Son of David" was "the most customary title of the Messiah."[4] And this, it may be safely assumed, made a deep impression on the throng about him.

One can easily imagine then the suppressed excitement of that crowd of pilgrims as they toiled upward to Jerusalem on that day. The bare possibility that they were accompanying the long expected, the long dreamed of and hoped for Messiah, was enough to fire their blood with enthusiasm, and we may well believe that the "songs of the degrees" which always marked these pilgrimages echoed and re-echoed amid these rocks with a reverberating passion as never before. That the procession which appeared before the walls of Jerusalem that afternoon was not a sudden eruption of popular feeling developed spontaneously on the spot but had approached in considerable force, if not in full force, from the east, seems clear from Mark's narrative, and it is a reasonable assumption that it was largely, perhaps wholly, composed of the throngs of pilgrims that had journeyed upward from Jericho with him on that day. For it was from the Mount of Olives and the direction of the Jericho road that this procession descended.

That it was more or less planned is also evident. When they approached the villages of Bethphage and Bethany on the Mount of Olives Jesus sent two of his disciples ahead into one of these villages (which one is not indicated) telling them they would find there an ass's colt tied, "whereon never man sat," which they should loose and bring to him. This indicates prearrangement, at least so far as the action of Jesus was concerned. For he was obviously minded to carry out prophecy in his public entry to Jeru-

[3]Mark 10:47.
[4]Klausner, Jesus of Nazareth, p. 307.

salem. God had said, through Zechariah, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion, shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold thy King cometh unto thee; he is just and having salvation; lowly and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass."[5] This was not only considered a messianic prediction but it was in complete harmony with Jesus' conception of the office, and was vaguely suggestive of the sacrificial nature of it clearly defined by Isaiah. When the colt was brought to him he mounted it, and there, upon the Mount of Olives, the procession was formed, in the neighborhood of Bethany and out of sight of Jerusalem though but two miles away.

So it was that Jesus descended upon the Holy City with a numerous retinue, already persuaded that they were participating in something of the nature of a messianic inauguration. That such a throng with such a feeling was infectious and that others joined with them as they approached the gates is not to be doubted. "And many," says Mark, "spread their garments in the way, and others cut down branches of the trees and strewed them in the way. And they that went before and they that followed cried saying, Hosanna, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest."[6] According to Matthew they cried "Hosanna to the Son of David,"[7] and according to Luke, "Blessed be the king that cometh in the name of the Lord."[8] All of these cries had the same messianic significance. With these tumultuous acclaims and reverential gestures Jesus and the multitude passed through the gates of Jerusalem. He was entering Zion in the rôle of the Messiah, accepted as such by the large numbers who accompanied him. He had made no public avowal that he was the Messiah, but he was not disclaiming the title, and in this entry he was enacting the part visioned by the prophet. But those who acclaimed him as such little dreamed that his idea of the messianic purpose of God was far removed from their idea of it, the material, political ideal

[5]Zech. 9:9.
[6]Mark 11:8-10.
[7]Matt. 21:9.
[8]Luke 19:38.

which filled their hearts with patriotic exaltation. And despite all he had told them his disciples were still of much the same mind as the clamorous multitude that crowded with him through the gates and up the way to the temple.

It was one of the requirements of the Law, or of traditional procedure, that every pilgrim to the Passover should, upon arrival at Jerusalem, proceed at once to the temple.[9] Therefore all those who had accompanied Jesus on the journey up from Jericho on that day, constituting perhaps the greater part if not the whole of the number in the procession, must have proceeded at once with him and his disciples to the temple inclosure. While the entry of such throngs at this time could not have been unusual, the entry of one proclaiming one of its number as the Messiah could not have failed to cause considerable excitement among those already gathered within the vast area. And it could not have failed also to arouse the apprehensions of the priestly hierarchy responsible for the temple service and the maintenance of order within its precincts.

It is uncertain from the Gospel narratives whether it was at this time or the following day that Jesus drove out the moneychangers and traders. Mark says specifically that Jesus went to the temple "and when he had looked round about upon all things, and now the eventide was come, he went out unto Bethany with the twelve,"[10] coming back the next day to "purge" the temple. But Matthew and Luke make no such division of time, and both clearly imply that the temple incident occurred on the same day and was the culmination of the initial demonstration. This seems the more probable, for certainly it would have been the more dramatic, the more impressive, and therefore the more effective procedure. Jesus enters the temple area accompanied by a great number of enthusiastic supporters. For the moment he is their hero, their leader. Backed by this force he "cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple," quoting Matthew, "and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers and the seats of them that sold doves."[11] The accounts of

[9] Klausner, Jesus of Nazareth, p. 311.
[10] Mark 11:11.
[11] Matt. 21:12.

Mark and Luke are to the same effect but Mark adds that he "would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the temple."[12]

That indicates a completely successful and virtually unresisted attack upon customary practices within the outer court of the temple which Jesus regarded as desecration. It does not seem probable that this drastic and sweeping action could have been accomplished without violent resistance from the temple guards, and without protest from the pilgrims and others already within the inclosure, unless there was a force supporting him too strong for effective opposition. This was sacred ground to all Jews, and it would seem that one attempting such a radical and instantaneous reform would have to have large popular backing if it were to be done without strong opposition from the people themselves. Assuming that the multitude that participated in the procession entered the temple area with Jesus, and that the "purging" immediately followed, as may be inferred from Matthew and Luke, the absence of effective opposition can be easily understood. It is also understandable that such a throng with such exultant and electrifying hosannas would infect most of those who were within the temple area, so that even the children, as Matthew tells us, joined in crying "Hosanna to the Son of David."[13] Moreover, this would account not only for the consternation and indignation of the priestly authorities—that would follow in any case—but for their fear to take immediate and decisive action against Jesus. If they had attempted to do this at the moment it would no doubt have caused a riot that would have brought the power of Rome into play against them as well as against the whole population. Whereas had Jesus waited until the next morning, when his followers of the preceding day had been dispersed among the vast assembly of other pilgrims within and without the city, and had then quietly entered the temple with none but his disciples, as we gather from Mark, to take the violent steps he is recorded as taking by all of the Gospels, it is difficult to believe he would not have met with instant and effective opposition, from the authorities, if not indeed from the people themselves.

[12]Mark 11:16.
[13]Matt. 21:15.

It seems most probable, therefore, that the procession and the cleansing of the temple were united in a single imposing demonstration that aroused considerable popular emotion and gravely alarmed the authorities. Furthermore, it seems evident that here Jesus was, by precipitate action, again deliberately fulfilling prophecy as well as carrying out a plan. For in that same verse of Malachi which foretold the coming of a forerunner of the Messiah—"Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me"—believed by Jesus to refer to John the Baptist, it is also declared "and the LORD, whom ye seek, shall *suddenly* come to his temple," while a few sentences further on it is said, "And he shall purify the sons of Levi and purge them as gold and silver that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness."[14] What is all this but a prediction, expressed in symbolical language, of the scene which Jesus here enacted? Jesus in the rôle of the Messiah, the "LORD" of the prophecy, came suddenly to the temple, over which the "sons of Levi," the priestly hierarchy, presided, and purged it, with the fire of his condemnation of the mercenary practices that they permitted and profited by, saying "It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves."[15]

To appreciate the enormity of the offense of Jesus in this assault upon the mercenary practices within the temple area, enormity, that is to say, from the standpoint of the temple authorities, it is necessary to understand the magnitude and importance of the system of trade and traffic which Jesus attacked. In previous chapters the fact that the priesthood constituted a hereditary aristocracy and also an aristocracy of wealth, growing out of the heavy taxes that were levied for their support and the maintenance of the temple service, has been mentioned. These taxes were paid for the larger part in tithes, the tenth part of the produce of the fields and flocks, but there were other taxes payable in money, together with gifts and ransoms. As the population and wealth of the country had increased through the years the temple revenues had grown larger and the fortunes of the priests benefiting thereby became

[14]Malachi 3:1-3.
[15]Isaiah 56:7.

greater. Josephus says, "With us to be of the sacerdotal dignity is an indication of the splendor of a family,"[16] and he says of two delegates from the Sanhedrin who were sent with him as a third delegate into Galilee that they "having gotten great riches from those tithes which, as priests, were their dues, and were given to them,"[17] preferred to return to Jerusalem rather than continue with him in the conduct of the mission on which they had been sent. But the various forms in which these revenues were received necessarily developed a system of marketing under the temple authorities. The produce not required for sacrifice, and not consumed by the priests, their families and their servants—and in the aggregate the amount at this time was enormous—had to be sold. Moreover, the practice among the wealthy of depositing money with the temple for safe-keeping, the deposit of trust funds, and the industry of changing money of many kinds, from abroad or at home, into the form which alone was acceptable for temple payments, made the temple something in the nature of a great central banking institution. "From all this we see," says Sir George Adam Smith, "not only how large in these later times the revenues of the priesthood and temple had become, but what a busy center the latter was both of trade and finance. Among the chief priests there were many of large fortunes. The High Priest and his counselors were trustees and accountants on a large scale—the more so that there were, except for a part of the period, no separate civil authorities. But they were also great traders. To assist them in the reception, investment and distribution of funds they had a great staff of officials, duly organized and entitled. But indeed in these days nearly every priest must have been a trader."[18] All this extensive system of trade and finance had grown out of a religion and worship that in its essence was singularly high and fine and pure compared with other sacrificial religions of that day, and in attacking the commercial activities that were most conspicuous in the temple area Jesus attacked the mercenary practices of the whole system.

[16]Life, p. 1.
[17]Life, p. 3.
[18]Jerusalem, Vol. I, p. 366.

By way of illustration, suppose the Constitution of the United States had in its beginning provided for the establishment of a national temple of religion, over which one family and their descendants should have complete control forever; that a tax of 10 per cent of all production should be levied upon the entire population for the support of the temple, its officials and their families and servants for all time, with no public accounting required. Let us suppose further that it were the conviction of the people that this law was handed down by the deity and was therefore not repealable or materially changeable. One can imagine how by now a tremendous monopoly of wealth and commerce would have developed within the hands of that family, how its members would resent any interference with their material privileges, and how alarmed they would be at any movement that might imperil the security of their emoluments or power.

Such, on a much smaller scale of course but with no less imposing results, were the position and the exclusive prerogatives of the "sons of Levi" under the Mosaic Law at this time. In addition to all this, the Chief Priest was the supreme head of the Jewish government, so far as political jurisdiction could be exercised under the restrictions of the Roman power, and he with other principal priests constituted a large if not the dominant part of the Sanhedrin, that singular judicial and administrative council which Jews everywhere regarded with awe. When we consider all this—the magnitude, the power, the wealth, of these custodians of the temple—we can begin to perceive in its true proportions the audacity of the attack of Jesus on their intrenchments. So far as known it was an act without precedent, and the alarm and indignation in the ranks of the priestly aristocracy must have been much greater than the meager and reserved reports of the Gospels would indicate.

Having accomplished his immediate purposes here, Jesus and his disciples departed from the temple and Jerusalem and climbed the slopes of the Mount of Olives to Bethany, leaving the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders to consider what they should do about this extraordinary invasion. That Jesus was acquainted with Jerusalem and its environs is hardly to be doubted. The Synoptic

Gospels mention only this visit in the closing week of his life, except for that visit of Joseph and Mary and the child Jesus recorded by Luke. But leaving out of consideration the frequent visits reported in the Gospel of John, it seems hardly likely that the close friendship manifested for the family at Bethany which gave him shelter and trust and love in these trying days could have been suddenly acquired. Mary and Martha, and, according to John, their brother Lazarus, appear abruptly in the pages of the Gospels not as new acquaintances but as old and intimate friends. It is not improbable they were in some degree kinfolks. At any rate, it appears evident that they not only knew him well but believed in him and stood by him. To their home, presumably, he and the Twelve went nightly, partly perhaps because it was dangerous for them to remain within Jerusalem, after the dramatic scene in the temple, but, more likely, because there were no living quarters available for them in the city during this period, and the home at Bethany was the nearest place they could stop; where, moreover, we may well believe they were sincerely and joyfully welcome.

The next two days were marked by events that contributed step by step to the tragic climax. That Jesus knew that in his violent attack upon the mercenary temple practices he had aroused the anger not only of the hereditary masters of the temple but of that politically dominant class to which they belonged, the Sadducees, is not to be doubted. It required great courage, therefore, and a total disregard of consequences, for him to enter the temple again, on the following morning. Mark does not say so, but we gather from Matthew and Luke that he calmly began teaching, or preaching, in the outer court of the temple or in the splendid colonnades surrounding it. However, he was confronted, apparently at once, by a delegation of the "chief priests, the scribes and the elders" calling upon him to say "by what authority doest thou these things," truly a strange demand from those who alone possessed "authority" within the temple area. But it seems obvious that, still fearing to take Jesus into custody because of the people, they sought to trap him into some admission or outright assertion that would weaken popular support. The response of Jesus to this demand was the defiant question: "The baptism of John, was it from

heaven or of men? Answer me." They were at loss for a reply, reasoning among themselves, as the Gospels record it, "if we shall say, from heaven, he will say, why then did ye not believe him. But if we shall say, of men, they feared the people, for all men counted John that he was a prophet indeed." So they weakly answered, "We cannot tell." Jesus then said to them, "Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things." And he followed this with a parable directly for their ears, the parable of the lord of the vineyard who let it out to husbandmen and journeyed into a far country. At the harvest season he sent back a servant to collect what was due him and the husbandmen beat the servant and sent him away with nothing. And he sent another servant, who was similarly treated, a third whom they killed, and still others who in turn were either wounded or murdered. Finally as a last resort he sent his one beloved son, thinking they would reverence him. But the husbandmen reasoned, this is the heir to the vineyard; if we kill him also it will now be ours. So they killed him. And Jesus asked, "What shall therefore the lord of the vineyard do?" Answering the question himself: "He will come and destroy the husbandmen and will give the vineyard to others."[19]

The inquisitors of Jesus here were not very quick-witted but they grasped the plain implications of this parable. The vineyard was Israel, the lord of it was God, and they and their predecessors in administration were the husbandmen, who had one after another rejected and beaten or killed God's servants, the prophets. Now they were plotting among themselves to kill his beloved son, and would do so, insuring thereby their own destruction. It was at once a prediction and a stern warning. But the only effect of it was to increase their anger and strengthen their determination to destroy this strange and presumptuous Galilean who threatened to endanger their precious privileges.

But who were these "chief priests, scribes and elders" who thus called upon Jesus to explain his conduct? It is a curious combination of titles that we hear first from Jesus when he predicts his death to the disciples at Caesarea Philippi, but which occurs frequently with some variations in all the records of this last week in

[19] Mark 11:27-33; 12:1-9.

Jerusalem. It is to be noticed that in the grouping the chief priests always come first, indicating they are of first importance officially, and doubtless first in influence. Sometimes the chief priests and elders are mentioned, at others the chief priests and scribes, but most often all three. Invariably, however, the chief priests preceded the scribes or the elders or both. "We are therefore to understand," says Schurer, "that it was this class [the chief priests] that played a leading part in the conduct of affairs."[20] But who then were the chief priests? None of the sources give any definite answer to this question. Their association with the "elders" indicates that in this combination of terms they were the priestly members of the Sanhedrin, for the elders in this grouping were certainly members of that body. Indeed all of its members were elders, and the Sanhedrin was formally addressed as "Elders of Israel," but for some reason the priests and scribes among them were commonly given separate designations. It may be presumed from this that the Sanhedrin was composed of three orders, namely, the more prominent priests, including the High Priest, who presided over its assemblies, the scribes, and the "elders," who in this grouping were such other persons as were neither priests nor scribes. Doubtless some of these were Sadducees and some Pharisees. As to the scribes in the Sanhedrin, it is highly probable that while most of them may have been Pharisees some of them were Sadducees. "There must have been Sadducean scribes," says Schurer. "For it is not conceivable that the Sadducees who acknowledged the written law as holy should have had among them none who made it a profession to study it."[21] And as Josephus frequently refers to the government of the High Priest and the Sanhedrin as being an "aristocracy" it is hardly likely that the priestly aristocrats who dominated the council, in secular affairs at least, and who were all Sadducees, would not have had scribes, lawyers, in that body who represented their own views of the Law.

It is to be inferred, therefore, that the persons in authority who confronted Jesus were members of the Sanhedrin, probably a small group. And it seems a reasonable conjecture that they were of the

[20] Jewish People in the Time of Christ, Div. 2, Vol. I, p. 176.
[21] Jewish People in the Time of Christ, Div. 2, Vol. I, p. 320.

aristocratic Sadduceans rather than of the Pharisees, for the former would naturally be much more agitated over the attack upon the temple traffic since their perquisites were directly affected, while the Pharisees were more concerned in precepts than in profits. It is to be noted, moreover, that with the possible exception of a single important incident presently to be related, the Pharisees, as such, disappear from the records at this point, and the "chief priests, the scribes and the elders" take the center of the stage as the opponents of Jesus. The reason for this is obvious. The Pharisees were a religious, not a political, group. Save as some of them were members of the Sanhedrin or other official bodies, they had no civil authority. It will be remembered that when they sought to dispose of Jesus in Galilee they enlisted the aid of the Herodians, who had the means of bringing the political authority of Herod Antipas to bear on the matter. That they exercised their great religious influence against the teachings of Jesus not only in Galilee but down through Perea and up to Jerusalem is beyond question, and because of this continued opposition through most of the public life of Jesus they stand out most prominently in the Gospels as his antagonists. But when Jesus with a throng acclaiming him as the Messiah entered Jerusalem and assaulted the agents of traffic within the temple, he became more a political than a religious problem, entering for the first time into conflict with the Sadducean element which had political authority in its own hands, and could exercise it completely, within the limits laid down by Rome. While the Pharisees doubtless were in sympathy with, and approved, that which followed, they apparently had little part in it.

But why did these officials of the temple and the Sanhedrin so fear the people that they hesitated to take immediate action against Jesus? Why did this priestly hierarchy, so strongly intrenched by law, by tradition, by power, by wealth, and by co-operation with Roman control, have any reason for alarm over this disturbance in the temple area led by a Galilean carpenter? The answers to these questions lie in the peculiar conditions which then prevailed. On the one hand, they held their position and retained their vast privileges by the sufferance of Rome, and Rome was not a little impatient with the difficulties which the peculiarities of the Jewish re-

ligion, and the stubborn attachment of the Jews to its strange prescriptions, created for the Roman administrators. There was good reason to fear that any popular movement antagonistic to Rome might bring down the overwhelming power of the empire upon the Jews, and incidentally put an end to the priestly hierarchy and all its privileges. On the other hand, the masses of the people were at this moment in the mood for such a movement. They were thrilled with the expectancy of a God-given and invincible leader, the Messiah, and could be easily inflamed into violent revolt by anyone claiming the divine appointment. This feeling was more tense during the Passover than at any other time, and upon the Jewish authorities, among whom the chief priests were predominant, rested the primary responsibility of holding these seething masses in check, Rome bringing its forces into play only when they failed. But the Sadduceans had the disadvantage in exercising responsibility in that the people distrusted them; and the chief priests in particular, while they were venerated as ministers of the temple sacrifices, were as political officials the objects of no little popular resentment. Some evidence of this ill-feeling is preserved in the Talmud in this curious outburst, which Klausner thinks may have been a street ballad of the times:

"Woe is me, for the house of Boethus: Woe is me, for their club!
Woe is me, for the house of Annas: Woe is me for their whisperings!
Woe is me, for the house of Kathros (Kantheras): Woe is me for their pen!
Woe is me, for the house of Ishmael (ben Phiabi): Woe is me for their fist!
For they are the High Priests, and their sons the treasurers; their sons-in-law are temple officers, and their servants beat the people with their staves."[22]

In this all the high priests and their families from the time of Herod onward are the objects of maledictions. Annas was the familiar Annas of the Gospels and Caiaphas was of the "house" of Annas. One can see in this tirade the indications of the auto-

[22] From citation by Klausner, Jesus of Nazareth, p. 337.

cratic spirit of the high priests and their satellites as political officials and the tyranny with which they exercised their authority. The staves and clubs and fists were the instruments of the oppression of the common people in the hands of their police. The "pen" referred to their official accusations, often secret, and perhaps prosecuted without formal trial, and the "whisperings" expressed the popular feeling as to the system of spies and informers they were said to sustain. Moreover, the priests constituted a hereditary aristocracy among a people otherwise essentially democratic, and the Sadducean party as à whole, of which the priests were the backbone, was obnoxious because of its wealth, its subserviency to Rome, its pride, and its opposition to the tenets of the Pharisees to which the great mass of the people subscribed, however loosely they may have applied them in practice.

For these reasons the situation of the priestly hierarchy, and the Sanhedrin dominated by it, was extremely precarious at this time. That their fears were justified was proved but a few years later when the whole temple and juridical system was caught between the fires of the people aroused to fanatical passion by the messianic delusion of a material and all-conquering kingdom, and the powers of Rome, and forever consumed. The temple was destroyed, the priests were massacred or dispersed, and the political entity of the Jews finally extinguished, all as a result of that friction among those explosive elements which were already plainly discernible in the time of Jesus.

It was extremely necessary, therefore, for them to proceed against Jesus with caution because there was in him, in the throng with him acclaiming him as the Son of David, an idea that might easily spread to all the vast multitude assembling for the Passover; and because of the weakness of their own position. So they thought by subtle questionings to draw popular support away from him before taking drastic measures against him, as they were determined to do. In this they seem to have succeeded. Mark says they "sent unto him certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians, to catch him at his words."[23] As Matthew reports it, the Pharisees "sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians."[24] But

[23]Mark 12:13.
[24]Matt. 22:16.

Luke has it that the chief priests and scribes "send forth spies, which should feign themselves just men [which should pretend to be honest men] that they might take hold of his words, that so they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor [Pilate]."[25] It is impossible wholly to reconcile these conflicting statements, but they all agree in this, that those people who now came to question Jesus were emissaries, not principals, and Mark and Luke agree that they were sent in order to trap him, by the same group of officials that had questioned him about his authority. It might have been "good politics" for them to send Pharisees, who were in favor with the people, or Herodians, who were Galileans, as Mark implies. On the other hand, it would have been more in accord with their customs for the chief priests to send some of their spies, above referred to, as Luke asserts; while it would seem to be contrary to the custom of the Pharisees, as revealed throughout the Gospels, to delegate the inquisition of Jesus to anybody, and if they sent any persons in this instance, as Matthew says, it must have been at the instigation of these same chief priests, scribes and elders, who alone had authority to do anything in the matter. At all events, it appears certain that if the Pharisees had any part at all in the ensuing inquiry it was as agents of these authorities.

This delegation approached Jesus with mock humility, and one can well imagine with hypocritical smirks, and they said to him, quoting Mark: "Master, we know that thou art true, and carest for no man; for thou regardest not the person of men but teachest the way of God in truth: Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not? Shall we give or shall we not give?"

Obviously these agents were sent to ask this question, and it is equally obvious that it must have been decided upon at a conference of their principals. No more searching or more crucial question could have been devised for their purposes, which would be met however answered. The Roman taxes, "tributum," were to the Jews in general the ever present symbol of their subjection. Around and upon them centered all their passionate hatred of Rome. It was inconceivable that a Messiah who in popular expec-

[25]Luke 20:20.

tation was to be the deliverer from Roman oppression could sanction the payment of tribute to Rome. The questioners were confident that if Jesus answered that the tribute should be paid, or "given," the people would regard him as an impostor and turn away from him. If, on the other hand, he answered that it should not be paid, he by that answer would take a political stand against the Roman powers, which could be counted upon to destroy him.

That Jesus realized the import of this question is not to be doubted. He knew the strength of the forces here confronting him and their destructive intent. But he did not shrink from the test. "Bring me a denarius that I may see it," he commanded. This was a Roman silver coin that was in general circulation throughout the empire. The Authorized Version of the Gospels calls it a "penny" but in Moffatt's translation it is termed a shilling, which much more nearly describes its character and value. When this was produced he asked, "Whose is this image and superscription?" on the coin. They answered, "Caesar's." Then he said to them, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."[26]

That was a counsel of submission in temporal matters to the sovereignty of Rome which if the Jews had accepted it would have saved them the immeasurable woes that were just ahead for them. But nothing could have been less agreeable to the emotions of the people, many of whom doubtless surrounded him at this moment. Nor with the prevalent notions of a political Messiah could they have been given more convincing evidence that Jesus was not the Messiah. It is significant that after this incident we hear no more of popular support for him. The Pharisees had long opposed him, the Sadducees had become his enemies since he came to Jerusalem on this last pilgrimage, and now the people fell away from him. Except for his immediate disciples and a few others, Jesus was alone. And it is a reasonable assumption that it was at this moment that even one of his disciples decided to turn against him. Jesus of Nazareth was indeed "despised and rejected of men." And about him rapidly gathered the deepening shadows of impending doom.

[26]Mark 12:14-17.

Chapter XXV

LAST SCENES OF THE TRAGEDY

On Thursday of this, the last week of his life, Jesus sent two of his disciples from Bethany into the city to engage a room wherein they could "eat the Passover." According to Luke this was Peter and John. Following his directions they found the place, obtained the use of a "large upper room," and "made ready the Passover."

The writers of the Synoptic Gospels are all definite in their statements that Jesus here contemplated their participation in the regular Passover supper, which inaugurated the celebration of the feast of the unleavened bread, commonly called the feast of the Passover, or more simply "the Passover." It is not only that they specifically say so, but all the circumstances point to that customary ceremonial. For example, there was no reason for entering the city if Jesus had in mind an occasion which concerned themselves alone. Moreover, there was now danger for him in entering the city at all, particularly at night. But it was required by law that the Passover must be eaten within Jerusalem. Again, the sending of these disciples into the city to engage a room and to "make ready" the Passover, indicates that they were instructed to make the preparations required by the legal regulations attending this meal. This included the acquirement of the specified viands for the occasion—the pascal lamb, the unleavened bread, the bitter herbs, and also the wine. Furthermore, the accounts of this last supper, the bread and wine, the hymn which they sang at the end, no doubt the "Hallel" (all or some part of Psalms 113-118 customarily sung or chanted at this event) and the words of Jesus himself, with their sacrificial analogy, all imply the usual "eating of the Passover" which Jesus regarded as symbolical of his own sacrifice.

On the other hand, the Gospel of John no less definitely fixes this supper of Jesus and his disciples twenty-four hours ahead

of the time for the Passover feast, and most biblical scholars hold that in this particular the testimony of the writer of this Gospel is the more trustworthy, because it seems highly improbable that the Jews would have countenanced, much less initiated, a proceeding against Jesus culminating in his arraignment before Pilate and his crucifixion, on the first day of their sacred festival. If that position is correct then this supper was an ordinary evening meal, made important only by the fact that it was their last meal together, and by the rite which Jesus there inaugurated. But how, then, are we to account for the acts and words in the Synoptic Gospels all plainly indicating a formal Passover supper?

Klausner, the Jewish scholar, seems to have found a solution for this problem. The first day of the Passover was always the fifteenth of the month Nisan. The Jews reckoned the day, every day, as extending from sunset to sunset. Every sabbath therefore began at sunset on Friday and ended at sunset on Saturday. So also the Passover festival began not on the morning of the fifteenth of Nisan, but was inaugurated with the eating of the Passover on the preceding evening, beginning at sundown, which day was, up to sundown, the fourteenth of Nisan. If, as the Gospel of John implies, the fifteenth of Nisan fell on a Saturday in this year, there was a conflict between the sacred observations of the sabbath and those of the Passover festival. "According," says Klausner, "to the ruling which was newly promulgated by the Pharisees in Hillel's time the Passover was regarded as a public sacrifice; if, therefore, the fifteenth of Nisan fell on a sabbath and the fourteenth on the eve of the sabbath, the Passover was sacrificed on the eve of sabbath (the fourteenth of Nisan) . . . even if this profaned the sabbath. . . . According, however, to an earlier ruling, which held good among the priestly party almost to the close of the period of the Second Temple (and therefore beyond the time here under consideration) the Passover was regarded as a private sacrifice and one which might not abrogate the sabbath rules; if, therefore, the fourteenth of Nisan fell on the eve of sabbath they sacrificed [the Passover] on the thirteenth instead of the fourteenth so as

not to profane the sabbath. Hence Jesus and his disciples celebrated Passover on Thursday, the thirteenth of Nisan."[1] This, it is to be seen, supports the records of the Synoptic Gospels. Obviously it is the conclusion of Klausner that the priestly ruling was still in force at this time and the Pharisaic ruling had not yet superseded it in practice. Certainly it is more agreeable to believe that the Synoptic writers were correct; that this was not an ordinary meal—no preparation and no entry into Jerusalem would have been necessary for that—but one invested with sacredness by immemorial tradition, thereby contributing materially to the dramatic solemnity and sacrificial symbolism of the Last Supper.

However or wherever it may have been, that supper was an incident of importance in the life of Jesus second only to the cross and his birth in the recollections of humanity. For the rite which he there initiated has persisted through nineteen centuries and it is still the center and the inspiration of some of the holiest thoughts in the Christian religion. The earliest record of what took place there is found not in the Gospels but in Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians. This was written some fifteen or twenty years before the Gospel of Mark. It was written by a contemporary of Jesus, and one who, while he did not know Jesus in life, was in intimate contact with his immediate disciples shortly after his death. What he says, therefore, is certainly drawn directly from the personal recollections of men who were present on this occasion and who heard and treasured the words of Jesus.

"For I have received of the Lord," says Paul, "that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: and when he had given thanks he brake it and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me."[2]

[1] Klausner, Jesus of Nazareth, p. 326.
[2] 1 Cor. 11:23-25.

Mark, who followed next to Paul in point of time, reports the incident thus: "And as they did eat Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them and said, Take, eat: this is my body. And he took the cup and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, and they all drank of it. And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many."[3]

Matthew's record is almost identical with that of Mark, but in neither is there any suggestion of a future and continuous repetition of this simple ceremony in "remembrance" of him. Luke, however, who does not follow Mark so literally as Matthew, relating the incident in his own words, confirms the statement of Paul as to the injunction of remembrance. Certain it is that it became immediately a ceremonial of remembrance among the followers of Jesus, who but a few months afterward were "breaking bread" daily,[4] making a "remembrance" of every supper, wherever they were gathered together. It was later that it became a formality reserved to certain times and places, and was enveloped in mystical conceptions and invested with more or less elaborate ceremonies. Whatever its development, it never lost its significance as a memorial. Its sacrificial symbolism, its association with the Passover, however, tended to disappear as it spread away from its Jewish sources.

Another incident of that supper which made a profound impression, of a wholly different sort, upon following ages, was the revelation of Jesus that one of their number would betray him. As reported by Matthew, Jesus said, "as they did eat," "Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me. And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I? And he answered and said, He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me. . . . Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said."[5] Judas Iscariot had already secretly entered into an arrangement with the chief priests to deliver Jesus into their hands at a "convenient oppor-

[3] Mark 14:22-24.
[4] Acts 2:46.
[5] Matt. 26:21-25.

tunity." And having learned where Jesus was to go on that night he either left the gathering after this revelation (at the command of Jesus, according to the Gospel of John) or separated himself from them as they went out. Doubtless they might have held him and prevented this betrayal but for the conviction of Jesus that it was useless. "The Son of man goeth as it is written of him," he said, or as it is "determined."

But why did Judas betray him? It is a fascinating question. The common assumption has always been that it was avarice, greed, that prompted him, for he was paid "thirty pieces of silver" for his service to the high priests. It is difficult to believe, however, that a man who had been attracted to Jesus by his personality or his teachings, had been chosen by Jesus as one of his disciples, had apparently been entrusted with the common funds of the group, and had followed Jesus loyally, so far as is known, throughout his mission up to this week, could have been persuaded to betray him for the insignificant sum of "thirty pieces of silver," but a few dollars by any reckoning. It seems more likely that Judas was actuated by larger motives, however mistaken. It may have been that he was convinced that Jesus was indeed the Messiah, as the term was commonly understood, that he expected Jesus to come into material power through some supernatural manifestation, a power in which he of course would share; that he grew impatient with the attitude of Jesus and sought to force the issue and bring to pass an immediate manifestation of this power by placing Jesus in critical contact with the authorities—a situation that would compel Jesus to exercise his supremacy. Or it is possible that he was bitterly disappointed in Jesus; that he had become convinced, as others had doubtless become convinced, through the incident of the coin, that Jesus was not and could not be the Messiah of his expectations; that he was in fact a deceiver, a "beguiler of the people," a false prophet; and that it was his patriotic duty therefore to deliver him up to the authorities for punishment. That, wrong as he was, he felt deeply, passionately, about the matter is indicated by the fact that when he saw that Jesus was condemned he, as Matthew records it, confronted the chief priests,

threw the blood money at their feet and went out and hanged himself. Judas has been held up to the ages as the arch-traitor of all time, and traitor of course he was, but he seems to have been himself betrayed by the violence of his own erring emotions.

That Jesus was aware of his intentions but did nothing to thwart his purposes is clear. He knew when he set out with his disciples late that night to go to the garden of Gethsemane that he would be arrested there, upon the information of his whereabouts furnished to the chief priests by Judas. He might have gone elsewhere, and escaped, for the moment, but that obviously was far from his thoughts. He had come to Jerusalem to die, and he realized that the dreadful hour he had long anticipated was at hand. "For I say unto you," he said to his disciples as they were leaving the upper room, "that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, 'And he was reckoned among the transgressors.' "[6]

But it was impossible even for Jesus, courageous as he undoubtedly was to come face to face with the dire end, without shrinking momentarily from the terrible ordeal. The humanity within him rose up in protest against the awful sacrifice to which he was committed. Perhaps he recalled the divine intervention by which Isaac was rescued after he was laid upon the altar. At any rate his heart was as lead within him. Thus far he had come without faltering for an instant on the road he saw laid out for him, but now —! He needed strength, and he sought it where he had always found it, in prayer. Drawing apart from his disciples in the garden he threw himself upon the ground in a nerve-wracked agony of dread and cried, "O my Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me! Nevertheless, not as I will but as thou wilt."[7] Three times at intervals he offered this impassioned plea, but coupled each time with a declaration of submission to God's will. Somehow he received the comfort and the assurance which he desired, and which now he so greatly needed, and not again did he shrink from the sacrifice.

[6]Luke 22:37 (Jesus here quotes from Isaiah 53:12).
[7]Matt. 26:39.

The Passover supper was a ceremonious affair the details of which are ignored in the Gospel narratives, for the writers were rightly concerned in but two incidents, that of the institution of the sacrament and the disclosure that one of their number was a traitor. It must be assumed, however, all present being Jews, that it was conducted in accord with the rules prescribed by custom, and that the party spent several hours at the table. Then followed the walk to Gethsemane and some time spent in the garden as Jesus prayed and his disciples slept. It must therefore have been around midnight when Jesus saw the gleam of torches among the trees and heard the sounds of an approaching company. Awakening his disciples he said to them "Rise up, let us go; lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand."

And immediately, as Mark reports it, "Cometh Judas, one of the twelve, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders," that is to say, from the officials of the Sanhedrin. Both Matthew and Luke also speak of a "multitude." This would imply not only a great number but something other than an organized force. In both particulars, however, this implication is incredible. The word which is translated "multitude" is loosely used throughout the Gospels. The tendency to exaggeration in nearly all the biblical writings, with the intention to impress rather than to deceive, has been previously discussed. But it seems improbable that the officials of the Sanhedrin would have sent any but their own police agents to make the arrest of Jesus, particularly so in view of the obvious fact that they sought to arrest him with as little public notice as possible. However, it is probable that, still apprehensive of resistance, they sent a large company, which seen among the trees, by the torch lights, may well have seemed to the frightened eyes of the disciples a "multitude."

But Jesus had no thought of resistance. He did protest that they had come to him "as against a thief in the night with swords and with staves to take" him, when they might have arrested him within the temple where he had been preaching daily. His complaint was just, but their reasons are clear. They

feared to take him openly. Nevertheless having voiced his resentment at the manner of his arrest he went quietly with his captors back into the city. "And they all," says Mark, meaning his disciples, "forsook him, and fled." All, that is to say, except Peter, who followed him "afar off," and yet three times that night denied that he had anything to do with this Galilean.

The accounts of the trial of Jesus have been the subjects of endless controversy. It has been the common assumption that he was tried by the Sanhedrin and convicted of what it considered a capital offense, and that this trial, judging from the Gospel records, was a travesty of justice, because it was throughout a violation of the rules and principles of criminal procedure prescribed for the Sanhedrin, which are set forth in the Sanhedrin tractate of the Talmud. But modern research and critical analyses seem to make it clear that so far as the Sanhedrin was concerned it was in no sense a formal trial but rather a preliminary examination, something in the nature of a grand jury proceeding held for the purpose of formulating an indictment for presentation to Pilate, the Roman governor.[8]

The reasons for these conclusions are, first of all, the manifest irregularity just mentioned; second, that the hearing did not take place in the official meeting place of the Sanhedrin but in the private palace of the high priest; and third, that the Sanhedrin at this time was without jurisdiction in criminal cases, at least in capital cases. Husband's exhaustive research and analysis leave little doubt as to this. But whatever the nature of the inquiry it is evident, from the fragmentary reports of the Gospels, and from the earlier statements recorded therein, that it was animated by a determination to effect the destruction of Jesus. Recalling what has been said of the precarious situation of the priestly aristocracy, which dominated the Sanhedrin, it is easy to understand this attitude. Moreover, the preponderating Sadducean element could not see anything but danger, not only to themselves but to the country, in messianic pretensions of any sort. They differed radically from the Pharisees and the rest of the people in this as in other important matters. They regarded

[8] Husband, The Prosecution of Jesus, p. 280.

the messianic hope as a vain delusion, filled with potential perils. That they were not wrong in this position, viewing messianism as they did, as indeed virtually the whole race did, as essentially a temporal and political matter, was abundantly proved by later disastrous events. The purely spiritual ideas of Jesus as they applied to the Messiah were utterly beyond their comprehension, as they were beyond the comprehension of other Jews, of even the disciples up to a later time, and they were, moreover, particularly repugnant to Sadducean convictions, for they were materialists who scorned the Pharisaic conception of life after death and all the speculations that attended it.

So believing, they could only look upon Jesus as a dangerous fanatic whose existence, however peaceful might be his intentions or however righteous his conduct, would be a continuous peril to the order of which they were the constituted guardians. And believing so, nothing less than his death could satisfy their fears. For Caiaphas had said, at one of their earlier conferences respecting Jesus, according to John, that "it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not."[9] "Expedient for us," meaning presumably the dominant class in particular of which he was the head. The matter of political expediency was uppermost in their minds.

But the question was how to do away with one who had acquired a wide reputation for his works, his teachings, his sanctity, who had been hailed as a prophet and even as the Messiah, without arousing the condemnation either of the people or of Rome. Evidently the leaders had planned their course before the arrest of Jesus. A charge of blasphemy would hold the people in check, a charge of treason against Rome would compel Pilate to take action. Foundation for both charges could be easily found in Jesus' preaching of the kingdom and his apparent assumption of the messianic distinction, with such manipulation of the evidence as they might consider advisable to attain their ends.

We have said that it must have been around midnight when the arrest was made. Possibly it was even later. At nine o'clock

[9]John 11:50.

in the morning Jesus started on his way to Calvary and death. So within nine hours, or less, he was taken prisoner, examined by the Sanhedrin, tried by Pilate, and ordered to execution. One cannot fail to be impressed by the haste of the entire procedure. Obviously the matter was thought to be urgent, and that the seventy-one august members of the Sanhedrin were summoned to meet at the palace of Caiaphas at or before dawn indicates the extreme importance which the leaders attached to the case.

From the account of Mark, which is closely followed by Matthew, it has always been the prevailing impression that there were two meetings of the Sanhedrin, one already assembled when Jesus was brought before it, and another after daylight. That is a natural but not an essential inference from the words of these writers. But taking into consideration the shortness of the time two meetings of this large body would seem to be highly improbable. To be sure, the criminal code of the Sanhedrin required that in capital cases after reaching a verdict it should meet again on the following day to declare sentence. But this rule would not apply when it ceased to have jurisdiction in capital cases, would not in any event apply to a preliminary hearing which was in no sense a formal trial, and, besides, two meetings only a few hours apart would not have been an observance of the rule, which was established to compel mature deliberation in such cases. But Mark does not say that there were two meetings. After describing some of the incidents of the hearing he says that "Straightway in the morning the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council, and bound Jesus and carried him away and delivered him to Pilate." This does not necessarily imply a separate meeting, but possibly refers to a continuation of the one session, the final deliberation of a grand jury after hearing the testimony in a case. Luke mentions but one meeting of the Sanhedrin taking place "as soon as it was day." The Sanhedrin does not appear at all in John's account. He says merely that Jesus was taken from the garden first to the house of Annas, former high priest and father-in-law of Caiaphas the present

high priest, who sent him to the palace of Caiaphas where he was questioned by that dignitary, who in turn sent him under guard with the chief priests accompanying him as accusers, to the governor, Pilate.

What can be regarded as certain is that Jesus was taken into the city and to the palace of the high priest; that at least a quorum (21) and probably all of the members of the Sanhedrin had already assembled there or arrived there during the subsequent hours; that Jesus was subjected to an examination by the high priest in the presence of the Sanhedrin; that the proceeding was brought to a conclusion shortly after dawn; and that he was declared to be worthy of death, because of "blasphemy" from the Jewish standpoint, and because of treason from the standpoint of Rome.

As to the details of this hearing, chief if not sole reliance must be placed upon Mark. Matthew's record is but a transcription of that of Mark. Luke mentions only a single incident, though the most important, and there is nothing of consequence in John's report of the questioning by the high priest. If Mark, indeed, was the author of the Gospel bearing his name, as there is good reason to believe, his sources of information were exceptionally dependable. He was a contemporary of Jesus, although much younger. He was living in Jerusalem at this time with his mother, Mary, who was a friend of Peter. He himself was afterward an intimate associate of Peter, as well as of Paul, and tradition has it, drawn from Papias, that his Gospel is largely a record of the recollections of Peter derived directly from that disciple. Peter alone among the disciples, with the possible exception of John, was in a position on that night where he might have heard something of what went on during the hearing. Moreover, Mark himself may have been somewhere about. In his Gospel he records a peculiar incident occurring in the garden of Gethsemane at the time of the arrest of Jesus. "And there followed him [Jesus] a certain young man, having a linen cloth coat about his naked body; and the young men [presumedly of the chief priests' company of police] laid hold on him; and he

left the linen cloth and fled from them naked."[10] That this was Mark himself is not improbable, else why insert in his record a detail so trivial in itself and so little likely to have been noticed in the confusion and alarm of the moment by any other? And if that young man was Mark, and he in his youthful zeal or curiosity had followed Jesus to Gethsemane, it is a plausible supposition that he ventured, after obtaining apparel of course, to the vicinity of the high priest's house eager for news of the proceedings there. Mark, his Gospel proves, was inherently a reporter as well as an evangelist.

According to Mark, then, witnesses had been summoned, and "many bare false witness against him but their witness agreed not together. And there arose certain and bare false witness against him saying, We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands and within three days I will build another not made with hands. But neither so did their witnesses agree together."[11]

As Jesus and his disciples were leaving the temple on the last day he was there he said to them, as reported by Mark, "Seest thou these great buildings? There shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down."[12] Perhaps this simple prediction had been distorted into a threat, maliciously or by that process of rumor which often turns harmless statements into words of evil. It seems clear that a report that Jesus had either threatened to destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, or asserted the power to do so, had been somehow circulated. For it is not only stated here by these witnesses, although Mark gives it an allegorical touch in his "with hands" and "without hands," but was repeated in derision by some of those about the cross on that same day, and was later referred to in the charge brought against Stephen.[13]

When the high priest asked Jesus what he had to say as to this, and other charges not specified in Mark's report, he did not answer. Then the high priest abruptly asked of Jesus, "Art

[10]Mark 14:51, 52.
[11]Mark 14:57-59.
[12]13:2.
[13]Acts 6:14.

thou the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed?" And Jesus responded, "I am; and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." At this, Mark tell us, "the high priest rent his clothes and saith, What need we any further witnesses? Ye have heard the blasphemy. What think ye? And they all condemned him to be guilty of death." The assertion of Jesus was not blasphemous in the strictly legal sense, for he had not uttered the sacred name of God, Yahweh, which alone, according to the Talmud, constituted blasphemy.[14] Nor, of course, was actual blasphemy, however interpreted, possible from the lips of Jesus. But from the standpoint of the high priest and his associates it was sufficient for their purposes. And the claim of Jesus that he was the Messiah was, they felt sure, ample ground for the action by Pilate which they desired. So the indictment was prepared.

The resounding notes of the temple trumpets announcing the sunrise and the morning sacrifice had hardly ceased to reverberate over Jerusalem when the chief priests and others of the Sanhedrin (Luke says "the whole multitude of them") left the house of Caiaphas with a retinue of attendants, having Jesus, bound, in their midst. They were now to present him to Pilate for trial, and they were to be his accusers and prosecutors, which was quite in accord with Roman legal procedure at that time.[15]

Pilate had taken up his residence for the Passover period, as doubtless was his custom when in Jerusalem, at the palace of Herod. We know nothing about the house of Caiaphas, but we do know something about the palace of Herod, from the descriptions of Josephus. Herod was, next to Augustus, the master builder of his age. He rejoiced in the construction of public buildings of all kinds, partly because his taste ran to expensive and ornate architecture, and partly to magnify the glory of his reign. It was at the height of his power and prosperity that he built for himself a residence in the "upper city," that height in the southwestern quarter which dominated the outlook over Jerusalem and its surroundings. It "exceeds all my ability to

[14]Sanhedrin 7, 5.
[15]Husband, The Prosecution of Jesus, p. 280.

describe it," says Josephus. "For it was so very curious as to want no cost or skill in its construction, but was entirely walled about to the height of thirty cubits, and was adorned with towers at equal distances, and with large bedchambers that would contain beds for 100 guests apiece in which the variety of the stones is not to be expressed; for a large quantity of those that were rare of that kind was collected together. Their roofs also were wonderful, both for the length of the beams and the splendour of their ornaments. The number of the rooms was also very great, and the variety of the figures that were about them was prodigious; their furniture was complete, and the greatest part of the vessels that were put in them was of silver and gold. There were besides many porticoes, one beyond another, round about, and in each of these porticoes curious pillars; yet were all the courts that were exposed to the air everywhere green. There were, moreover, several groves of trees, and long walks through them, with deep canals and cysterns that in several parts were filled with brazen statues through which the water ran out."[16]

This description is somewhat incoherent but one gets from it an impression of the vastness and magnificence of this royal edifice, into one of the courts of which Jesus was now conducted to stand before the arbiter of his earthly destiny. Doubtless Pilate had been apprised of the coming of this delegation from the Sanhedrin and of its purpose. At any rate, he seems to have been ready for it, and upon their arrival "went out unto them and saith, What accusation bring ye against this man?" And, according to Luke, they (the spokesmen for the Sanhedrin, doubtless the chief priests) said to him, "We find this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is Christ a King."[17] This doubtless states in brief the three points of their indictment, which they amplified a little later by charging that "He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place."[18]

[16]Wars, V-4-3.
[17]Luke 23:2.
[18]Luke 23:5.

They apparently said nothing about blasphemy, nor about his threat to destroy the temple, which were items for Jewish consumption, and not likely to influence Pilate against Jesus. Pilate, indeed, it may be surmised, would have been pleased at the destruction of the temple by any Jew or Jews if it could have been done without involving him in trouble, for most of the difficulties he encountered in governing these rebellious people centered upon the temple and the peculiarities of its worship. But all the charges presented directly concerned him, as the representative of Roman power. The second point in the indictment, "forbidding to give tribute to Caesar" was manifestly untrue. Quite to the contrary, Jesus had counseled the payment of the tribute. But this point seems not to have been pressed, nor does it appear to have had any weight in the judgment. Perhaps the prosecutors, knowing it could not be proved, were content to let the accusation speak for itself. As to his perverting the nation they had ample proof, from their standpoint. The Pharisees would back them in this. And it was true that he "stirred up the people," but they did not tell Pilate that he stirred the people to ways of peace and goodness and not to insurrection. The reference to Galilee must have interested Pilate, for Galilee was known to be the breeding ground of sedition, and he himself seems to have had a gruesome experience with Galileans, mingling their blood with their sacrifices.[19]

However, the charge that Jesus claimed to be the Messiah, a King, evidently determined the final decision of Pilate. "Perverting the nation," if construed to mean an influence for rebellion, as the prosecutors wished him to construe it, was treasonable conduct, but assuming the title of King, without authority from Rome, was treason direct and specific. For Pilate could not imagine a claim to kingly honors and power except in relation to a material and political kingdom. The purely spiritual conceptions of Jesus were beyond his comprehension, as they were indeed beyond the comprehension of the Jews. It was this point of the indictment against Jesus which impressed Pilate as being of first importance. When the charges were presented to

[19]Luke 13:1.

him, one gathers from all of the Gospels, he turned to the silent but dignified and unawed prisoner before him and said: "Art thou the King of the Jews?" Jesus answered, "Thou sayest it." That this was an affirmative response, and was perhaps a common idiom equivalent to a positive affirmation, is indicated in Matthew's account of the last supper wherein Judas asks Jesus if he is the one who should betray him, and Jesus answers "Thou hast said." At any rate, it is obvious that Pilate interpreted it as an admission. Save for this laconic answer to Pilate's question Jesus, according to the Synoptic Gospels, said not a word during the trial, offering no explanation or defense. "And the chief priests," says Mark, "accused him of many things, but he answered nothing. And Pilate asked him again, Answerest thou nothing? behold how many things they witness against thee. But Jesus yet answered nothing, so that Pilate marveled."[20] The nature of the "many things" of which he was accused is left to conjecture by both Mark and Matthew, and Luke mentions only the three charges referred to above, but Mark and Matthew call particular attention to the silence of Jesus throughout the proceedings. He had been similarly silent during the hearing before the Sanhedrin, saying nothing apart from his declaration as to the messiahship. In this he was fulfilling to the letter the prophecy of Isaiah, which he regarded as referring to himself: "He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before his shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth."[21] Moreover, he must have felt that his fate was already determined, and having accepted it as an incident of his messianic mission, defense was not only useless but contrary to the purpose of his mission.

Nevertheless Pilate, by all accounts, was strangely reluctant to condemn him. "Strangely" because mercy was not in accord with his nature, as it is revealed by Josephus and Philo. Possibly he was actuated to some extent by his dislike of these priestly prosecutors, and suspected that they were using him as an in-

[20]Mark 15:3-5.
[21]Isaiah 53:7.

strument to their own ends. Probably there was something in the personality of the silent man before him which denied the merit of the accusations. Perhaps Pilate felt that while Jesus was technically guilty of treason, under the Roman law, having admitted that he regarded himself as a king, he was in fact politically harmless. At any rate, Pilate told the chief priests that he thought Jesus should be released. But this was quite contrary to the wishes of his prosecutors and they cried out vehemently, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" Pilate then suggested as an alternative that he crucify Barabbas, an insurrectionist and murderer whom he had in custody, and let Jesus go, it being a custom that he release one such prisoner at the time of the Passover. But again they cried, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" He might release Barabbas if he wished but they wanted Jesus removed, and crucifixion was the usual Roman method of removal for all who were, or were supposed to be, dangerous to the state. According to the Gospel of John, they cried out, "If thou let this man go thou art not Caesar's friend; whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar."[22] While no such declaration is reported in the other Gospels it presents a convincing explanation of Pilate's final acquiescence that is elsewhere lacking. The men prosecuting Jesus were the political powers of the Jewish people. They could by laying the matter before Caesar compel Pilate to defend his action in releasing Jesus, and it would not be easy to justify himself before that supreme and stern authority, Tiberius, who would certainly regard the claim of Jesus to kingship as temporal and political and therefore treasonable, an intolerable offense to him. At all events, it is clear that the prosecutors of Jesus would consent to nothing less than the death penalty, which was indeed the sole penalty possible under the Roman law for treasonable action of any sort, "treason" by that law being so broadly interpreted as to cover anything antagonistic to Roman power.[23] Pilate, therefore, was persuaded to order the crucifixion of Jesus.

All the Gospels except John make it appear that the people, a "multitude" of them, were present at this trial before Pilate,

[22]John 19:12.
[23]Husband, Prosecution of Jesus, p. 233.

and supported the chief priests and other members of the Sanhedrin in demanding the crucifixion of Jesus. It seems, however, highly improbable that a multitude of people, in any real sense of the word, could have been permitted by the Roman guards to enter within the walls of the palace of Herod, at any time or under any circumstances. Pilate was governing a rebellious nation under difficult conditions. The spirit of insurrection was in the air, particularly so at this Passover time. The description of Josephus makes it clear that the palace area was strongly walled, and presumedly fortified. It is not at all likely that Jews would have been admitted to the palace inclosure at all except upon official business or upon invitation, Pilate being what he was, a stern, suspicious, unfriendly ruler and also a soldier. The chief priests and other members of the Sanhedrin were there, of course, on official business and doubtless they were accompanied by their aides and retainers, in the whole a body of considerable numbers, but all attached to the priestly delegation and all admitted because of their relation to the work in hand. Unless there were some to witness in behalf of Jesus—and there appear to have been none—there was no occasion for the entry of any others. It is inconceivable that the gates were thrown open to admit the populace. It seems to be a reasonable assumption, therefore, that the Jewish company within the courtyard was composed entirely of the officials of the Sanhedrin and their attendants, mostly if not all of the Sadducean class, and all concerned in accomplishing the destruction of Jesus. These were the "people" who cried insistently, "Crucify him!" The people in the general sense were not present or represented. And it is to be noted that it was only within this enclosure, and from this priestly party, that the cry of "Crucify him!" was heard. The streets outside were thronged with people when Jesus was led from the gates of the palace to execution, but no cries of condemnation are reported from them. On the contrary, Luke says, "there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also [the women] bewailed and lamented him."[24]

[24] 23:27.

When Pilate had ordered the execution of Jesus he was taken in charge by the Roman soldiers and made ready for the immediate application of the death sentence. This was the rule under Roman law. It was the custom also that a person condemned to death by crucifixion should first be scourged. Accordingly the martyrdom of Jesus began with this cruel preliminary, a lashing with whips across the naked back of the victim which drew the blood at every blow. This apparently was done in the courtyard, the scene of the trial, after which the soldiers led him into one of the halls of the palace where they submitted him to further indignities in mockery of his kingly pretensions. They hastily plaited a crown of thorns for him and placed it upon his head; threw about him a purple robe and knelt before him, crying, "Hail, King of the Jews." And these were Roman soldiers, members of the invincible legions of Caesar—callous brutes who reveled in cruelty and whose only virtues were courage and obedience to discipline! Yet this man whom they reviled was indeed a King, greater, far greater, than Caesar. The incomparable grandeur of his soul was manifested but a little later when in the agony of the cross he cried, in behalf of these same wretches, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!"

It was the "third hour" of the morning, nine o'clock, when the company of soldiers with Jesus in their midst passed through the palace gates to the street on the way to the place called Golgotha, the place of crucifixion. Another custom, another refinement of Roman cruelty, required that the person to be crucified must carry his own cross. How far they had to go is not known, for the location of Golgotha ("Calvary," Luke calls it) has never been identified. That it was somewhere beyond the city walls is assumed from a passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews, which says that Jesus "suffered without the gates."[25] If so it was distant from the palace of Herod, and Jesus, weakened by the strain of these last days and the torture of the scourge, gave way under the weight of the cross. The soldiers

[25]Hebrews 13:12.

then compelled a man standing in the throng, a Cyrenian named Simon, to carry it.

Arrived at the place the soldiers lost no time in carrying out their orders. The Gospels say simply, "and they crucified him." When they were written crucifixion was so common an event throughout the empire that no explanation of it was considered necessary. It was the penalty for many offenses. Slaves were frequently executed in this manner, as were thieves and bandits in general. The people were so accustomed to the sight that it aroused in but few the feeling of horror which animates the modern mind at the mere thought of it. It was, however, a Roman and not a Jewish form of execution. When the Jews had possessed authority to carry into effect the death penalty it was by methods less cruel.

The cross which Jesus had borne part of the way to the place of execution was probably a rough pole with a similar piece of roughly hewn wood fixed to it at right angles near the top, and not the conventionalized cross of squared and smoothly finished timber familiar to our mind's eye. Nor do we get a true idea of the extreme cruelty of the crucifixion from the pictures and images which we are accustomed to see. Art and devotion have combined to soften the outlines of the event and to conceal its gruesome details. Nor indeed is anything to be gained by dwelling upon the features of a spectacle that in every respect should have been revolting to human sensibilities. It is sufficient to say that the instrument of torture was laid upon the ground, the victim, his apparel having been removed, was thrown, not gently we may be sure, upon it; his arms were spread and his hands fixed to the cross piece by spikes drived through them; his feet similarly attached to the upright timber; the cross with its burden of unspeakable agony was then lifted up and its base planted within the hole in the ground prepared to receive it. Thus suspended he was condemned to die a lingering death, every moment of which he suffered excruciating pain. So it was that Jesus suffered on that day, the bravest, truest, finest gentleman that ever walked upon the earth.

It happened that two thieves had been condemned to a similar death, and they were crucified at this time, the cross of Jesus standing between them. It is singularly impressive that the course of events, events over which he had no control, confirmed his own conviction that he was the suffering servant referred to in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. "He was numbered with the transgressors," said the prophecy, and here he was, he that was without sin, numbered with thieves and enduring the ignominious death meted out to them. The prophet also said "the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed," and upon the back of Jesus at that moment were the bloody stripes made by the scourge. It was further predicted that "he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death." Here were the wicked, and a little later he was placed in the tomb of a rich man, Joseph of Arimathea. The "long arm of coincidence" can hardly be made to stretch far enough to embrace all these; nor can it be reasonably claimed that these incidents were manufactured by the Gospel writers to fit the prophecy. They are as much a part of the veritable history of the event as is the crucifixion itself.

The Gospel writers have sketched the outlines of that most memorable tragedy upon Calvary and it requires no great stretch of the imagination to fill in the picture. Three crosses upon the summit of a bald hill, each cross bearing upon it a tortured human being; upon the central cross Jesus of Nazareth, above his head a placard proclaiming in Aramaic, Greek, and in Latin what Mark terms the "superscription of his accusation," "The King of the Jews," placed there by order of Pilate, probably as a warning that this would be the end of anyone assuming such a title, that Rome would not countenance any messianic pretensions; about the crosses a company of Roman soldiers sufficiently large to prevent any interference with the executions; and circled around the spot but held at some distance away by the soldiers, a great crowd of people. Such a spectacle has always drawn a crowd in all ages, and does even now whenever an execution is open to the public view, which happily is becoming a rare occurrence. In that crowd watching with morbid interest these victims

of Roman cruelty were, we are told, the chief priests who had prosecuted him, and who derided Jesus, saying, "He saved others; himself he cannot save," while from some in the throng came the taunting cry, "Thou that destroyest the temple and buildest it in three days, save thyself and come down from the cross." And "afar off" in the crowd stood the women who loved him, doubtless many others who had felt the spell of his personality, and perhaps some of the disciples, all silent, wondering, fearing.

About the sixth hour, noon, it is said that the air grew dark, as if heavy clouds had thrown a somber veil over the scene. A few hours later a cry was heard from the lips of Jesus, wrung from his tortured soul by his physical anguish, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" And then, as if in answer to this cry of agony, his noble spirit was liberated. Jesus of Nazareth was dead. The sacrifice was consummated. He who had said, "Greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friend," had laid down his own life for mankind, friends and enemies, "a ransom for many," expressing thereby a love that is immeasurable in depth, or width, or height.

And that evening "the chief priests, scribes and elders" doubtless congratulated themselves that they were well rid of this dangerous Galilean, while Pilate feasting in the palace of Herod reviewed the work of the day with prideful complacency, feeling that he had disposed of a delicate matter satisfactorily and no more would be heard of this man Jesus and his vain pretensions.

But the chief priests and Pilate were alike mistaken, profoundly mistaken. Jesus of Nazareth though dead still lived. They little knew that by their action they had seated Jesus upon a throne incomparably greater than that of the Caesars, and had ushered in a new era for the world at large.

SECTION III

THE CONSEQUENCES

Chapter XXVI

VICTORY OVER DEATH

Jesus of Nazareth was dead.

There was no doubt about it. The centurion in command of the soldiers who had executed him so reported to Pilate when Joseph of Arimathea asked for permission to take the body for burial. This Joseph, whose service in this connection is mentioned by all of the Gospels, but whose name nowhere else appears in the records, is said to have been a man of some wealth, a "counselor," presumedly a member of the Sanhedrin, but one who had not "consented" to the prosecution of Jesus, of whom he was "secretly a disciple." He was from Arimathea, probably the ancient Ramah, where Samuel the prophet was born and resided, and that may still have been his home, inasmuch as it was only a few miles from Jerusalem. However, he possessed a tomb in the immediate neighborhood of the city, one that had never been used, and it was his wish to give the body of Jesus decent burial therein.

Pilate granted him the permission he sought, and with this authority the body was taken down from the cross, wrapped by Joseph in "fine linen," which he had bought for this purpose, carried to the tomb and laid within it. The Jews buried their dead, preferably in caves or in sepulchers hewn out of the solid rock in the semblance of caves. The tomb of Joseph was of the latter kind. It was usual for men of means to provide such burial places in advance of need, just as the modern man acquires a burial lot in a cemetery as a prudent preparation for the future. Having placed the body of Jesus in the tomb the aperture was closed with a stone which was "rolled" into it, a large stone, "very great" as Mark describes it, but one apparently that fitted the opening.

Meanwhile, what of the disciples? The Gospel writers tell us nothing of the effects upon them of the calamitous twenty-four hours that had brought an ignominious death to their leader.

We only know that they fled when Jesus was arrested in the garden of Gethsemane. Nevertheless, we can be very sure that they were crushed, dismayed, appalled, by the suddenness and force of the blow. They had followed Jesus for many months, had looked upon him from the first as a superior being to whom they were willing to devote their lives; and in the last few weeks at least they had come to regard him as much more than this, as, indeed, the ardently expected Messiah, the divinely anointed leader of their race to a place of supremacy in the world. Now their dreams were dispelled, their hopes shattered, their anchorage broken. They were like a little flock of masterless sheep on their Galilean hills, bewildered, lost. Moreover, their hearts were broken, for they had so loved this man, Jesus, that they had given up home, family, friends, their all, for him. Now he was taken from them and cruelly put to death. In all the world there could have been no group so disconsolate, discouraged, forlorn, as they on that sabbath following the crucifixion of Jesus. It seems clear that the prediction of Jesus that he would rise again had made no impression upon them. For them all was lost, and they were utterly without hope.

Indeed, if the burial of Jesus had been the end of Jesus, all that he was, all that he said, and all that he did, would have been lost to the world. There would have been no record of his life for future ages. The memory of him would have passed with the passing of those who knew him, and mankind would not have known that he ever existed.

But on the Sunday morning after the crucifixion something happened, something tremendous, inexplicable, that not only placed the name of Jesus upon the pages of history but made it rank forever above all other names in the annals of humanity. Something happened that created the conviction, suddenly and firmly implanted within the minds of the disciples, and within the minds of many others, that Jesus had risen from the tomb, that he was again alive, and now eternally alive, that he was indeed the Messiah, the Christ, and that he soon would come again as King of kings and Lord of lords to establish the King-

dom of God and to usher into it all who believed in him and were worthy of entry.

It was this conviction that turned the despair of the disciples into elation, that transformed discouragement into an active and confident enthusiasm, that changed them from negligible followers along the trail of Jesus into leaders themselves, burning with zeal and filled with power and understanding they had not previously manifested. And as this conviction affected the immediate disciples, the Eleven, so it did many other disciples. For this little group of twelve, now reduced to eleven by the traitorous withdrawal and death of Judas, were not alone in their attachment and allegiance to the Man of Nazareth. There must have been a considerable number drawn to him of whom we hear little or nothing. It is to be remembered that, according to Mark, the Twelve were finally set apart from other followers of Jesus and ordained to his service;[1] that, according to Luke, he at one time sent seventy "other" disciples out on missionary journeys;[2] and that Paul reported five hundred "brethren" to whom he appeared after his resurrection.[3] Then there were the women who followed him, some of whose names have been made familiar by the records, and there were many others, no doubt, who did not journey with him but were nonetheless ardent disciples, such as Mary and Martha of the home at Bethany, for example. And it is not improbable that among that throng that made up the "triumphal" procession into Jerusalem were a large number who were more than momentarily attached to Jesus. There are also incidental references to individuals as disciples, such as Joseph of Arimathea, and the man "Cleopas," mentioned once by Luke but otherwise unknown.[4] When we consider the magnetic quality of the personality of Jesus, and the drawing power of his words and deeds, manifested throughout the pages of the Gospels, and give due weight to the references to disciples, other than the Twelve, which are noted above, it seems a reasonable assumption that there were at the time of

[1] Mark 3:13, 14.
[2] Luke 10:1.
[3] 1 Cor. 15:6.
[4] Luke 24:18.

the crucifixion of Jesus a large number, perhaps thousands, in Palestine, particularly in Galilee, who regarded themselves as in spirit disciples of Jesus, among whom the effect of the news of the resurrection of Jesus was almost, if not wholly, as electrifying and inspiring as among the Eleven. If this assumption is correct Jesus had laid a broader and firmer foundation for the movement that was to follow than the little band of personal attendants, although they of course were the impelling nucleus of it.

In the consideration of the conviction that was the motive force of this movement it is well to remember that it was based upon personal knowledge and experience. We must depend upon the writings which contain accounts of the appearances and the words of Jesus after his resurrection, and the more those accounts are subjected to critical analysis the more confusing they become. But Mark, the earliest of the Gospels, was written some thirty-five or forty years after the death of Jesus, and by that time Christianity was already established in most of the important cities of the empire and was growing rapidly. The Gospel records added nothing to the conviction that Jesus had risen from the dead for that was firmly fixed before they were written, but they contributed mightily to its continuance in succeeding generations when the testimony of those who saw with their own eyes and heard with their own ears was no longer orally available.

Therefore, what we have first to consider is the unquestionable fact that within thirty years after the death of Jesus, a revolutionary religious movement based upon his personality and teachings, but primarily upon the belief that he had come out of the tomb in which he was interred and was alive again, to redeem and save mankind, had swept irresistibly over the Roman Empire. And this belief was founded upon the testimony of many men, regarded as entirely trustworthy, who had seen Jesus and heard his words after his resurrection. "If Christ be not risen," said Paul in one of his epistles, "then is our preaching vain."[5] He himself was as completely convinced of the truth of this resurrection as were the immediate disciples of Jesus, the women,

[5] 1 Corinthians 15:14.

and others who said they had seen Jesus alive in the days following his crucifixion. And he himself presents the earliest recorded evidence of that resurrection. "For I delivered unto you first of all," he says, "that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures; and that he was seen of Cephas [Peter], then of the twelve; after that he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that he was seen of James [the brother of Jesus]; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time."[6]

According to Paul then, Jesus was seen after his resurrection by many people, most of whom were still living when he wrote this epistle to the Corinthians. Doubtless he had heard some of these, notably Peter and James, testify to these post-mortem appearances of Jesus. Added to all this was his own mystical experience when he was suddenly transformed from a persecutor of Jesus to one of his most devoted followers. The Book of Acts was written long after this but by one who also had been in direct contact with some of those who had seen Jesus, and there is no doubt that his narrative of events following the resurrection records information imparted to him by men participating in those events. In the first chapters of this book we can see how this conviction that Jesus was again alive, that he was indeed the Messiah, filled these people with a flaming fire of enthusiasm and devotion, enabling them to convince thousands of the truth of their testimony, and thus to inaugurate the movement that spread so rapidly over the empire.

The fact of this conviction and of its marvelous effects is not to be denied. It is a matter of universally credited history that within a generation after the death of Jesus the religion bearing the name of his messianic title had penetrated the greater part of the empire and was giving concern to the government at Rome. It was a faith in which those who attached themselves to it al-

[6] 1 Cor. 15:3-8.

ways risked, and frequently suffered, persecution or death. All attempts to suppress or destroy it served but to increase the number and zeal of its adherents. Such a faith must have had a substantial foundation in its beginnings.

Certain it is that something happened at Jerusalem that changed the course and direction of civilization. If it was not the resurrection of Jesus, as the records witness, what was it? A provincial Jew crucified upon a malefactor's cross; the disciples he had drawn about him, provincials themselves who had not up to that time manifested more than the average intelligence or initiative of their kind, crushed by his tragic end, disconsolate, disheartened, hopeless—no situation imaginable could have less potential power. And yet out of that situation and from these men was started a movement that "turned the world upside down." Viewed from any angle, or in any perspective, the consequences of the death of that Galilean carpenter upon the cross were inexplicable, incredible. We can, to be sure, trace nearly every foot of the development, and point to the circumstances which favored it, but the wonder of it is not thereby lessened. If God was not in it then it is useless to believe that God has anything to do in the affairs of men or has any influence upon human history. And if that is useless then it is useless to have any belief of God at all. For of what value is any belief in God apart from an assumption that he is somehow related to mankind?

Moreover, any belief in God is necessarily a belief in the supernatural, if we confine the word to its basic meaning of "above nature." It has become a discredited word in this age of science because it has been so indiscriminately applied to manifestations seemingly, but only seemingly, contrary to nature, and to the delusions of the ignorant, that it has become almost a synonym for superstition. Yet the fact remains that the supernatural, in its primary meaning, is essentially the basis of all religion. For religion, whatever its form, is dependent upon an idea of a power or powers above or superior to nature. If, therefore, one believes in a God at all, whatever the conception of the god may be, one must believe in *something* that is supernatural. If, on the other

hand, there is no such conception, if the existence of God is denied, then it follows that religion is a delusion and all consideration of it vain. But mankind in general has always refused, and still refuses, to believe that it is a delusion, and persists in the conviction that there is a power superior to nature and therefore supernatural. To that extent at least the supernatural, expressed in the idea of deity, is taken for granted by everyone who accedes to any form of religion.

But if there is a supernatural power over all there must be a supernatural power operating within all. Science has made it clear that creation throughout the universe is a continuous process, that throughout all nature there is a force or forces constantly at work. And many leaders of science see in these processes the evidences of a mind controlling them. We may think of the laws of nature, says Sir James Jeans, "as the laws of thought of a universal mind."[7] If, then, there is a universal mind at work in the processes of nature and expressing its thought in the laws of nature, it is inconceivable that this mind is not concerned in human life, which, so far as we know, is the highest product of natural laws. And if it has such concern in human life it must somehow manifest itself in human development. It has been the conviction of many ages that this universal mind, call it what we will, reveals itself from time to time to humanity through the agency of certain men who are somehow drawn into communication with it, and "inspired" by it, thereby becoming transmitters of its thought and purpose. It is, at any rate, undeniable that virtually all the advances made by man in the field of religion, in the conceptions of the nature of deity and of the relations of man to deity, have been through the instrumentality of individuals, who by their ideas and their teachings have elevated the standards of religion upon a higher plane for their own and future generations, and who because of their service to humanity stand out pre-eminent in the history of mankind. Confucius, Buddha, Zoroaster, Plato, and most of the Hebrew prophets were men to whom the world is still in-

[7]The Mysterious Universe, p. 150.

debted and whom it yet reveres, while all their contemporaries, of whatever rank or power, are forgotten, with the exception of those of Plato.

If there is a mind at work in the universe and concerned in the progress of humanity, it is a plausible assumption that it has manifested itself through such men as these, touched their minds with something of its own divinity, and given them commanding power to direct the minds of other men into higher channels, bringing them into closer relations with, and a better understanding of, the universal mind. And if this is a reasonable assumption as to all such instances, it is much more reasonable as to the man Jesus, whose influence upon the religious thought and ethical conduct of mankind has been incomparably greater. "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets," says the Epistle to the Hebrews, "hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things."[8]

If it is true, therefore, that God spoke to mankind through Jesus, thereby revealing himself more clearly than he had ever done before, so clearly indeed that further revelation in this universal sense has not been necessary, it seems no less true that in Jesus he found a medium uniquely adapted to such revelation, uniquely fitted for the divine purpose, yielding himself unreservedly to the divine will and accepting the sacrifice involved in his commission. Moreover, if this be true, it follows, at least as a possibility, that the Power which is superior to all nature may have been uniquely exercised in this instance, first to endow its agent with something of its own power in order to have him make a special impress upon his time, and second by giving the requisite impetus to the movement which the agent was chosen to inaugurate through his restoration to life after his sacrifice upon the cross. In brief, the assumption that there is a Mind, supreme in the universe, that it is concerned in the welfare of mankind, and that it so revealed itself progressively through the minds of particular men, warrants the further presumption that it may use its powers in the accomplishment of its purposes in

[8] 1 :1.

ways not always understandable to men, who at best are far from a complete understanding of the mysteries of nature or of life.

In the chapter on "The Miracles of Jesus" we said that some of the miracles were not explainable by any natural law we know anything about, and that the possibility of the supernatural could not be lightly dismissed even in this age, for "it cannot be ruled out entirely without ruling out God." It was, as we also said in that chapter, the conviction of the Gospel writers that it was through "the power of the Spirit," that is the Spirit of God, that Jesus was enabled to perform the miracles they recounted. Jesus said "if I by the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you."[9] It was by "the finger of God" that he felt he performed his "works." That may be regarded as the test of the supernatural. Is it the work of God? If we restrict the meaning of the word "supernatural" to that which is above and superior to nature, and that resides wholly and exclusively within the power of God, then the question is not whether God can do this or that, but whether it is conceivable that he would do anything contrary to the laws of nature, which he established. And this raises another question, whether there could be anything he might do that would be in reality contrary to his own laws. In a sense all that he does, all natural law, is miraculous, in that it is beyond human power and understanding. In this sense miracles are being performed about us every day, in the processes of nature and in the experiences of human life. And it is undeniably true that the more science delves into the secrets of nature, particularly so in recent years, the greater the wonder of it becomes. Yet so far as we know, so far as science knows, nothing in all this is contrary to natural law.

But what do we know about natural law? What do we mean by natural law? Eddington, the English physicist, has divided the laws of nature into three groups.[10] The first he calls "identical laws," the second "statistical laws," and the third "transcendental laws." The identical laws include the law of gravi-

[9]Luke 11:20.
[10]Science, Religion and Reality, pp. 214-216.

tation, the law of conservation of mass and energy. The statistical laws are observed in the laws of gases and of thermodynamics. The transcendent laws are those of atomic structure and the quantum process. "In the first category," says another eminent scientist, commenting on this classification, "are laws pertaining to processes that science can now both describe and explain. The laws in the second category pertain to processes which have been described but cannot yet be explained. Whereas in the third category are laws pertaining to processes which have not as yet been either satisfactorily described or adequately explained."[11] Dr. Mather goes on to point out the fact that "the identical laws are really not laws of governance; they are merely descriptions of what occurs. . . . The laws which really govern the universe are the statistical and transcendent laws. Although these laws still baffle us, we have every reason for believing that they are rational and inviolable; that they are truly laws."[12]

It thus appears that there is a vast field of natural law, recognized by science, but which eludes explanation, and that in this field are the real mysteries of nature, the real administrative forces of nature. It follows, therefore, that what God may do, in accord with the laws of nature, is quite beyond human definition or limitation. All this has a bearing upon the problem of the resurrection of Jesus, because if it occurred it is quite possible that it was by the operation of a natural law that is as yet beyond the explanation of science, rather than an occurrence inconsistent with and in violation of law; that it was not supernatural, in the more common interpretation of the word, as something contrary to laws of nature, but that it was supernatural in the sense of an act of God in conformity with laws whose nature is unknown. And, we repeat, if it did not occur, then the consequences of his death present a problem no less inexplicable or unsolvable.

But what do the Gospel records tell us of the resurrection of Jesus? Each of the four Gospels tells a story different in almost

[11]Mather, Science in Search of God, p. 124.
[12]Ibid. p. 125.

every detail from the others. In no two of them are the appearances of Jesus of identical time or place or to identical individuals. They all agree that the discovery that the tomb was empty was made by one woman, Mary Magdalene, either alone, or as first among several other women who went to the sepulchre early on that Sunday morning to anoint the body of Jesus with spices. Matthew says it was Mary Magdalene and "the other Mary," Mark that it was Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James, and Salome; Luke that it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James, "and other women"; and in John it is Mary Magdalene alone that is mentioned. The Jews did not embalm their dead and where a body was accessible, as in such a receptacle as this, it was customary to anoint it with preservative spices to defer decomposition. That was the purpose of the visit to the tomb on this morning. Obviously the women expected to enter the tomb, and they wondered as they approached how they could obtain access, the weight of the stone at the door being great. It was a last manifestation of their affection and they did not anticipate any obstacle to the performance of this service other than the stone at the door. That none of the disciples expected the restoration to life of Jesus on this day, if ever, is clear from the fact that they did not go to the tomb. The anointing of the body was a woman's task.

According to Mark, the women, when they came within sight of the tomb, saw that the stone had already been rolled away from the door, and entering they found a young man, "clothed in a long white garment," who told them that Jesus had risen, and that they should go at once and tell the disciples, "and Peter," to go to Galilee, where they should see him. The women at this fled from the tomb, "neither said they anything to any man, for they were afraid." Here, unfortunately, the Gospel of Mark, as it is found in the earliest manuscripts, comes to an end. The rest of the chapter, following the eighth verse, was added in later manuscripts, probably by someone in the second century.[13] It seems incredible that the original record could have been so abruptly terminated, leaving out all refer-

[13]Moffatt, Note to this chapter of Mark in his translation of the Bible.

ence to the reappearance of Jesus, and the most plausible explanation of this is that the end of the papyrus roll on which the closing words were written was somehow torn away and lost. This deprives us, however, of the testimony of the most reliable authority as to all events in the career of Jesus at a point where his testimony would be exceedingly valuable. And it evidently compelled the writers of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke to turn to, and rely upon, other sources of information for their accounts of the resurrection. Both had followed Mark pretty closely in the order of the events narrated by him, but here they were without his guidance. This seems to account for the diversity of their statements. The Gospel of John, of course, stands out by itself as an entirely independent narrative from beginning to end.

According to Matthew, then, Jesus appeared to the women as they returned from the tomb, and later to the eleven disciples in Galilee. According to Luke, none of the women saw Jesus, but went from the tomb to a place, presumably in Jerusalem, where the disciples were temporarily abiding and told them what they had seen and heard in the tomb. The disciples did not believe them, for "their words seemed to them as idle tales." But Peter ran to the tomb, and found it empty, save for the grave clothes in which Jesus had been wrapped, and departed "wondering in himself at that which was come to pass." Up to this time, according to the Lucan narrative, Jesus had appeared to no one. But on the same day he is said to have joined two otherwise unknown disciples, one named Cleopas, the other not named, who were walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus, and talked with these two at length, who did not recognize him until he had revealed his identity to them after they had arrived at their home. Hastily returning to Jerusalem, they told the disciples what they had seen, and while they were still speaking of their amazing experience Jesus himself suddenly appeared in the midst of the group. Then, after reminding them of his prediction that he would arise from the dead, and "opening their understanding" as to its significance, he led them out over the Mount of Olives to Bethany and there "was parted from them

and carried up into heaven." According to John, Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene at the tomb, to the disciples the same day at the place where they were assembled in Jerusalem; again to them eight days later; and in the closing chapter of this Gospel, which many scholars believe to be a later addition to it, he is said to have appeared to them a third time on the shore of Lake Galilee.

It is evident from these diverse statements that they were drawn from different sources of information. But taking them together with the statement of Paul we are impressed with their agreement that Jesus appeared after death not once but a number of times, and not only to the immediate disciples but to others, Paul going further than any of the Gospel writers in his assertion that Jesus appeared to "upward of five hundred brethren at once." While it is impossible to reconcile all their differences of testimony, they are nonetheless unanimous as to the essential contention of all that Jesus rose from the dead.

Was it indeed a fact, or was it an illusion or delusion? If a fact, was it a physical appearance, or some sort of psychic phenomenon? No one has ever answered either of these questions —and many have tried to do so—in a way completely satisfactory to the intelligence, nor is it probable that they will ever be so answered. It is in the nature of things a fascinating but futile speculation.

What is certain is that they, not only the eleven disciples but many others, believed it with absolute conviction, believed it against their will, believed it so firmly and unshakably that they staked their lives upon it, and in that belief established a religion that still dominates the thought and action of the world. Without that belief, associated with the incomparable personality and teachings of Jesus, this would have been utterly impossible. It required this deep-rooted and ineradicable conviction, and the enthusiasm and energy it inspired, to spread the faith irresistibly over the empire and to make Jesus the Christ a supreme figure for future ages. And it is of the utmost significance that this was in accord with what seems clearly to have been a divine plan whereby Jesus was to be made a special in-

strument for the revealing of the nature and will of deity, and by his sacrifice draw men up to him and through and by way of him to the knowledge of God. This sacrifice would have gone for nought and the plan would have failed if the cross had been the end of Jesus. There can be no doubt of this. Something had to follow, conveying an indubitable assurance that death was not the end, that his Spirit had risen triumphant from the tomb, and that he more than ever was alive, tremendously alive. However that assurance was conveyed, by whatever mystical means it was indelibly impressed upon the minds of his followers, its purpose was accomplished. That is a fact abundantly proved by the immediate records of the time and by the undeniable evidences of history.

Chapter XXVII

BEGINNINGS OF THE CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT

While no other writer but Luke mentions it, it seems to be beyond reasonable doubt that there was a belief in the minds of the disciples that Jesus had appointed a rendezvous at Jerusalem for them, and had given to them a promise of a visitation of divine power upon them there. According to Luke the last words of Jesus were: "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high."[1] And in the Acts (assuming that Luke wrote the Acts, as well as the Gospel attributed to him) he repeats this, saying that Jesus "commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of [from] me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence."[2]

Some such expectation as this must have kept them together in Jerusalem, after the crucifixion and the resurrection, for we are told that "When the day of Pentecost was fully come they were all with one accord in one place."[3] Pentecost was the Greek name for what the Jews called the Feast of Weeks, one of their three great annual festivals, although this, unlike the Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles, lasted only one day. It was celebrated fifty days after the Passover. The "one place" referred to was presumably the "upper room" where in the previous chapter it was stated that the twelve disciples abode (one Matthias having been chosen to take the place of Judas). We are also told that other disciples, men and women, had gathered there to the number of 120 in all, and it is to be inferred that this entire group, not merely the Twelve, was present in "one place" on that memorable day of Pentecost. What happened is thus described in the Book of Acts:

[1] Luke 24:49.
[2] Acts 1:4, 5.
[3] Acts 2:1.

"Suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

"And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed and marveled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia. Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God.

"And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this? Others, mocking, said, These men are full of new wine.

"But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice and said to them, Ye men of Judea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: for these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day [nine o'clock in the morning]. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel: 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.' "[4]

Peter then addressed the gathering at length, telling the people of Jesus of Nazareth, whom they had crucified and who had not been "holden" by death; and he declared to them in conclusion that "God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have

[4]Acts 2:2-17.

crucified, both Lord and Christ." The result of his preaching, says the record, was that "they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls."

This incident is of the utmost importance in the history of the Christian religion, for here on this day began that movement which, founded upon the person and teachings of Jesus, upon his death and his resurrection, was to spread with marvelous rapidity over the Roman Empire. It is commonly regarded as the birthday of the church. Rather it marked the birth of the infant that upon maturity was to become the church, for it was a good many years before it developed into an organized institution. The church, that is to say, grew out of subsequent experience, which gradually revealed the need for coherent organization with more or less definiteness of aid and of interpretations, and under official direction.

But the chief significance of the incident lies not so much in the fact that it was the beginning of the fellowship that led to the church as in that it marked the entry of a compelling force into the movement, a conviction that here the divine spirit, the Holy Ghost as it is termed, had taken possession of it, had endowed it with power, and had placed upon it the stamp and the authority of God. It is not too much to say that it was this more than anything else, other than the conviction of the resurrection of Jesus upon which it centered, that gave the Christian religion its all-conquering sweep. For the idea of the Holy Spirit thenceforward permeated the entire movement, made it in the thought of all a divine rather than a human movement, infusing it with a burning zeal that was irresistible.

This was not a new conception in Jewish thinking or dreaming. It had its origin in the mystical visions of the remote past of the race which had made its leaders the spiritual pioneers of humanity, the pathfinders on the way to God. "Alone among the races of which we have record the Hebrews conceived of the 'Spirit of God.' They thought of their God, Jehovah, as having a spirit; and increasingly as time went on they traced the effects

of the divine will, especially those which were startling or abnormal, to the agency of this Spirit." In the Old Testament certain functions are "assigned to the Spirit as peculiarly appropriate to its activity. These include the enhancement in certain men of their natural gifts and powers, such as wisdom, judgment, skill and craftsmanship. But there is one function which is specially assigned to the Spirit in the Old Testament, that of 'inspiration.' It was the Spirit that took possession of men, and became the organ of divine communication through men to other men. . . . This discovery was to prove of momentous importance in the history of religion. It opened the way for the development of religion on a new plane, for all that is properly described as 'spiritual religion'; in other words, for a religion which involves and expresses reciprocal intercourse and fellowship between God who is spirit and the spirit of man.'"[5]

While the term Holy Spirit is rarely used in the Old Testament it seems to have come into common use in the rabbinical writings without change in meaning from the older "Spirit of God" frequently expressed in the Law and the Prophets and in the Psalms, and in this later form or in the alternative rendering "Holy Ghost" it appears in the New Testament, although the term "Spirit" without the epithet is often used, particularly by Paul.

That the idea of endowment and guidance by the divine Spirit, however designated, was familiar to Jewish thought in the time of Jesus is plainly indicated in the Gospels. According to Matthew Jesus at his baptism "saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon him." Mark describes the event in much the same words. Says Luke, "Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness." And Jesus in his sermon at Nazareth, according to Luke, said, quoting Isaiah, "The Spirit of the LORD is upon me." There are many other similar references to the Spirit in the Gospels. It was, therefore, for something definite and well known that the disciples waited with eager expectancy in that

[5] C. A. Anderson Scott in the collection of essays entitled collectively "The Spirit," edited by B. H. Streeter, pp. 117-120.

upper room. It was not for them a strange supernatural visitation, but one to which the thought of their race was well accustomed.

Moreover, the phenomena which accompanied their "baptism of the Holy Ghost" on the day of Pentecost were in accord with the traditional ideas. Usually there was said to be something visible or audible in association with any important manifestation of the divine Spirit, according to the accounts of them. The Spirit descended upon Jesus in the form of a dove and he heard a voice. Most frequently, however, it was said to be accompanied by wind or flame, or both, as in the Pentecost instance. "Though the nature of the Holy Spirit is really nowhere described, the name indicates that it was conceived as a kind of wind that became manifest through noise and light. . . . The Holy Spirit, being of heavenly origin, is composed, like everything that comes from heaven, of light and fire."[6] Whether the sound of the "rushing, mighty wind" was actually heard, or the "cloven tongues like of fire" were actually seen, by those present, or whether this was the customary symbolism applied to the description of the event by those from whom Luke obtained his information is a matter of conjecture. It is to be noted, however, that Luke's record shows no indication of amazement at the phenomena of the wind and the flame among those who gathered around the place. What did astonish them, and apparently what alone astonished them, was the utterances of those affected by the Spirit which the observers, Jews from many lands, interpreted as words of the foreign languages with which they were most familiar.

This "speaking with tongues" was indeed something new in Jewish experience or tradition, but it was so frequently repeated in the subsequent spread of the movement that there can be no doubt that it was an actual occurrence in this instance. Paul includes it in his enumeration and discussion of "spiritual gifts" to which he devotes Chapters 12 to 14 of First Corinthians. That he attaches no great importance to it save as an indication of the presence and working of the Spirit is there made clear. It

[6]Jewish Encyclopedia, The Holy Spirit, Vol. VI, p. 448.

is in this discussion that he includes that incomparable tribute to the power of love, which is the supreme "spiritual gift" beside which all others are relatively naught. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels," he says in the first verse of Chapter 13, "and have not love, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal," and he was here referring to the gift of "tongues," first manifested at Pentecost.

Another thing that was new in the visitation at Pentecost was the revolutionary declaration that anyone who wished it might now receive the Holy Spirit. Previously, the Scriptures indicate, it came only to certain persons chosen for certain tasks. Now, announced Peter, the time had come to which the prophecy of Joel referred, when, God had said, He would "pour out his Spirit upon all flesh." And he told his hearers that if they would repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ they would "receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Thus the gift of the Spirit was made conditional upon the acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God, and it was through him and his sacrifice for men that it was made obtainable. And this conviction that those who accepted Jesus were infused with the divine Spirit, and thereby set apart for the Kingdom of God, gave a peculiar and impelling power to the movement and distinguished it with marked emphasis from all other religions or conceptions of religion.

The reality of this idea of the Holy Spirit colors all the New Testament writings. The epistles of Paul, which are the earliest of such writings, abound in references to the Spirit, and reveal the great importance which he attached to it throughout his amazingly successful ministry. These epistles were written, of course, before any of the Gospels as they are now known to us, and before the Book of Acts, and they leave no doubt that this conception of the Spirit had been dominant from the beginning, as Luke records in The Acts. And although Paul often expresses the idea in mystical language he makes it clear that the Spirit is not merely a mystical notion, but a very practical and potent influence in the shaping of human lives, determining their moral character and their relation to God and to their fellow-men. For

while the "gifts" of the Spirit were varied, some of them, as "speaking with tongues," marked by emotional ecstasy that was regarded as a visible sign of the presence of the Spirit, the real and abiding evidence of the Spirit was in its "fruits," in its permanent moral, ethical, and religious effects upon the character and conduct of the individual believer. The fruit of the Spirit, he said, is "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."[7] Again he said, "The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth, proving what is acceptable to the Lord."[8] The writer of the Gospel of John has Jesus foreshadowing this conception of the Spirit in his discourse to the disciples at the Last Supper. "The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things."[9] It was the "Spirit of truth," he said.

It is not easy in our age so far removed as this from the beginnings of Christianity to realize the potency of this conception of the Holy Spirit. One must endeavor to grasp the full significance of the circumstances which surrounded these beginnings. Here was a people to whom the supernatural was as the breath of life. More than any other people they looked to the Deity as the source and director of their being. Through the ages they had been bred to the belief that their religion was superior to every other interest, that their very existence depended upon the maintenance of the covenant relation with their God which had been established through Moses. And they had long regarded the direct communication of the Spirit of God to men as a fact beyond question. They were profoundly impressed with the conviction that in the fulfillment of his covenant what they had conceived as the Kingdom of God would be established and there had grown up among them a universal belief that it would be established through the agency of a Messiah. In the time of Jesus there was a prevalent opinion that the Kingdom was at hand, that the long expected "day of the Lord" had arrived and the Messiah might appear at any moment. This expectancy

[7]Gal. 5:22, 23.
[8]Eph. 5:9, 10.
[9]John 15:26.

created a state of intense emotion, manifested on the one hand by fierce uprisings against alien power, in the mistaken notion that the "Kingdom" meant a political and material supremacy for their race, and on the other in a marked increase of religious devotion, shown particularly in the vast gatherings at the great national festivals.

Whatever ideas Jesus may have had as to the extension of the kingdom to the gentile peoples—and we have discussed that at some length in a previous chapter—it is obvious that his disciples had no such thoughts. It was, indeed, inconceivable to them that any but the Jews, and their proselytes, could share in the fulfillment of the divine promises. Was not the covenant of God with them alone, and was not the kingdom, however pictured, to be a fulfillment of that covenant? It was years before they could be persuaded, and then only by the force of circumstances, that the religion they were inaugurating was universal in its scope.

Nor in the beginnings did they imagine that this religion was something apart from the religion of the Law in which they had been bred. Believing as they did that Jesus was the Messiah, the Christ, they thought their sole mission was to convert other Jews to this belief. That belief, it was their opinion, was in no way contrary to the principles and prescriptions of Judaism. It was, indeed, its glorious consummation. They apparently had not been impressed by the controversies of Jesus with the Pharisees that there was anything inherently antagonistic to the teachings of Pharisaism in the acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah. At any rate, they continued to conform to the customary rules of Judaism, and devoutly so, worshiping daily in the temple.

And it seems, from the record in the Book of Acts, that for a time they were eminently successful in their undertaking. On the first day at Pentecost it is reported that three thousand souls were added to their number. A little later, as a result of the preaching of Peter, we are told that "many of them which heard the word believed, and the number of the men was about five thousand."[10] It is even said that at some time after this

[10]Acts 4:4.

"a company of priests were obedient to the faith,"[11] and, still more surprising, some of the Pharisees seem to have believed.[12] But the most important result of their efforts was the conversion of the Jews resident in other lands to the faith in Jesus. It will be recalled that on the day of Pentecost Jews "from every nation under heaven" gathered about the disciples and expressed their amazement, and it is highly probable that among the great number who were there and then added to the believers, were many of these Jews of the "dispersion," who carried the news abroad when they returned to their homes. Moreover, there can be little doubt that the news of the Gospels was rapidly communicated to the Jews in all the cities of the Roman Empire. It is said that "they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia and Cyprus and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only."[13] Certain it is that before Paul began his systematic missionary work there were believers in Jesus among the Jews in many places outside Palestine. Thus it was that in the early years the religion of Jesus was exclusively a Jewish sect with no thought that it could ever be anything else, until it was impressed upon Peter and later upon Paul and his associates that it could not be so confined.

[11] Acts 6:7.
[12] Acts 15:5.
[13] Acts 11:19.

Chapter XXVIII

THE WAY PREPARED

In his Epistle to the Galatians Paul said that "when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son." There was, indeed, something peculiarly propitious in the time in which Jesus lived. If the appearance of Jesus were in pursuance of a divine plan, as the passage suggests, no period in human history could have been chosen in which the political, social, and religious conditions were so favorably disposed for the revelation which he embodied, or for the spread of his teachings. The preceding ages seem to have conspired to bring about a state of civilized human society that would be open at every point for the message of Jesus, and if the world was not prepared for him by divine influences somehow directing its development to that end, fortuity operated with singular efficiency.

Three centuries before Jesus, Alexander the Great had by a swift and irresistible movement of conquest extended his dominion over all Western Asia and over Egypt, as well as over the Grecian States. That unity of empire did not long survive but in its divisions Greek power predominated for two centuries afterward and Greek culture remained predominant for long after the beginning of the Christian Era. One highly important effect of that predominance was the universality it gave to the Greek language throughout all the vast region that Alexander had subdued. While not extinguishing the native tongues it had become before the time of Jesus the common instrument of communication between all the civilized peoples east of the Italian peninsula. But for this development the spread of the gospel would have encountered enormous difficulties. Outside the area in which their native Aramaic was spoken the first evangelists would have confronted the barriers of strange languages which only time, and a long time, could have effectively overcome. Every modern missionary knows how essential to the success of his task is the ability to speak to the people to whom he is sent

in their own language and how difficult it is to acquire proficiency in the use of that language. The Gospel evangelists spoke Greek and everywhere they went they found audiences who used Greek wholly or to some extent in their daily intercourse. The value of this language of common usage everywhere in opening up the way for the Gospel cannot be overestimated. Without it the rapid spread of the Gospels even under the favorable political conditions then existing would not have been possible.

These political conditions had been but recently established. They had never existed before, and they have never existed again since the Roman Empire began its decline. That is to say, at no other time in human history has the civilized world been so completely and firmly united under a single government. This obliterated the usual barriers between nations, opened all the avenues of communication and transportation to common use, inaugurated an era of general peace, save for an occasional and always futile rebellion, such as those of the Jews; broke down or reduced age-old prejudices, and developed a better acquaintance and understanding among the peoples composing the empire. If the region covered by the Roman Empire had been divided into numerous countries, as it had been before, and as it was afterward—countries constantly at war with one another, hating one another, as the countries of that region do even today; constantly imposing restrictions upon international intercourse—if such conditions had obtained at the time of Jesus and the apostles, one can hardly see how the gospel could have made much headway. The Roman Empire unconsciously opened all ways to the progress of the gospel, and it placed no obstacles to its advance until its growth began to give its officials concern. By that time, although only a generation had elapsed before the first persecution, its foundations had been so firmly established throughout most of the empire that it could not be suppressed.

That these two conditions, existing at no other time in the history of mankind, political unity and a universal language, contributed largely to the spread of the Christian religion cannot be doubted. Indeed, it is difficult to see how it could have spread

at all, except slowly, and after overcoming great obstacles. But there was another condition at this particular time which aided materially in the dissemination of the gospel. That was the marked decline of the influence of most of the long-established religions of the countries of the empire, especially those of Greece and Rome. Paganism was in a state of progressive disintegration. The old gods were but little reverenced, if at all, and new forms of religion were imported or devised to provide substitutes for the ancient altars. The rise of the so-called mystery religions was a most significant social phenomenon of that age. Whatever their attractions it is obvious that they could not have obtained adherents in great numbers if the old faiths had not become decadent, if the old religions had not lost their power and broken down. The people turned to the mystery religions because they appealed to their instinctive longing for the spiritual assurance they had lost, because they seemed to open up avenues of hope and of comfort for the soul. In short, the world in the midst of a material splendor never before equaled was spiritually bankrupt, and hungered for the restoration of its solvency. The time was ripe, therefore, for the introduction of a religion of substance, of truth, and of purity to take the place of the flimsy and shallow pretenses of the mystery religions, and the fallen idols of the older paganism.

There was still another circumstance that aided materially in the spread of the gospel of Jesus. That was the distribution of the Jews over the Roman Empire. Josephus quotes Strabo as saying that "the Jews had entered into every city and no place in the world can be found that has not received this race or been possessed by it." They were particularly numerous according to Josephus, in Syria and Asia Minor, Antioch and Damascus especially containing great numbers of them. They were numerous in Babylonia, and in Egypt Philo estimated their number at 1,000,000. There were many of them in Rome itself, and in all the cities of the countries bordering the Mediterranean. Wherever they were established they had their synagogues, maintained their traditional form of worship and as nearly as they could in pagan surroundings obeyed the precepts of the

Mosaic Law. Moreover, the missionary spirit was in this period active among them, and the gentile converts to Judaism, the proselytes, were numerous.

Through their pilgrimages to Jerusalem on festival occasions, and the continuous accession to their numbers from Palestine, and by other processes of communication, they were kept informed of events in their homeland. It would have been strange indeed if the death and the alleged resurrection of Jesus, the claim that he was the Messiah, and the news of the growing cult in Palestine founded upon this claim did not awaken universal interest among them. It seems clear from the records in Acts that many of the Jews in other lands had been persuaded to a belief in Jesus as the Messiah before any missionaries went out from Jerusalem to preach the gospel to them. When Paul went down to Damascus as an agent of the Sanhedrin it is obvious that there must already have been a great many Jewish converts to the faith in Jesus in that great city to prompt such a journey. So also in Rome. Wherever the first evangelists went they seem to have found the Jews, whom alone they sought in the beginning to reach, receptive to their message, and the synagogues were thrown open to them. And while many Jews rejected the gospel and there was fierce dissension among them over the matter, it was not until the issue developed over the admission to the ranks of the believers of Gentiles who were not full proselytes to Judaism that strong and aggressive opposition to the movement arose among the Jews of the dispersion, as it did among the Jews in Palestine.

It is therefore evident that the first foundations of Christianity throughout the empire were laid in the Jewish synagogues. "The dispersion of the Jews among the nations," says an authority on this subject, "was probably the greatest single factor in the preparation for Christianity, one main reason for its success."[1] And another authority, speaking particularly of Jewish missionary activity previous to the Christian movement, says: "To the Jewish mission which preceded it the Christian mission was indebted, in the first place, for a field tilled all over the

[1]Angus, Environment of Early Christianity, p. 143.

empire; in the second place, for religious communities already formed everywhere in the towns; thirdly, for what Axenfeld calls 'the help of materials' furnished by the preliminary knowledge of the Old Testament, in addition to catechetical and liturgical materials which could be employed without much alteration; fourthly, for the habit of regular worship and the control of private life; fifthly, for an impressive apologetic on behalf of monotheism, historical teleology, and ethics; and finally, for the feeling that self-diffusion was duty. The amount of this debt is so large that one might venture to claim the Christian mission as a continuation of the Jewish propaganda.'"[2]

It is evident also that the proselytes among the Jews prepared the way for the extension of the Christian religion to the Gentiles in general. These proselytes were Gentiles themselves. They had doubtless been attracted to Judaism by the nobility of its faith, the purity of its ethics, and the simplicity of its worship, as contrasted to the forms of religion by which they were surrounded. That they were so attracted indicates that they were as a rule people of spiritual qualities somewhat exceptional in that day. Nevertheless, they were Gentiles by birth and rearing and could hardly have had the prejudices and inhibitions which the Jews had inherited from ages of racial and religious exclusiveness. Therefore they must have been less moved by the arguments of the Jews who opposed the inclusion of Gentiles within the Christian ranks without the requirement of formal initiation into Judaism, and more likely to align themselves with the Christian movement once convinced of its validity. Moreover, it is probable that through their gentile connections these proselytes aided in stimulating interest among Gentiles not attached to Judaism and thus contributed largely to the spread of Christianity among the pagans.

In all of these peculiar circumstances the ground seems to have been cleared for a rapid extension of the Christian movement in its first years and while its initial fires burned brightest. That this spread among the Jews abroad was spontaneous in the beginning carried forward by numerous unknown converts with-

[2]Harnack, Missions, Vol. I, p. 15.

out specific leadership, is evident. It was more than fifteen years after the death of Jesus that Paul began his active and systematic missionary labors and it was some fifteen or more years later that he reached Rome. Yet we find him in his Epistle to the Romans, written several years before that journey, addressing the believers in Rome, saying to them, "Your faith is spoken of throughout the world." Who was it who carried the gospel to Rome, and who developed that large following of Jesus before Paul came to them? Clearly there was a great number of them there, and they had gone so far as to receive Gentiles within their ranks even before they had had the benefits of Paul's teachings, for in his epistle to them he addresses Gentiles as well as Jews.

As early as the time of Claudius there were Christians in Rome, for the Roman historian Suetonius says that Claudius banished from Rome "the Jews who made great tumult because of Chrestus."[3] That this refers to dissensions among the Jews over Jesus is probable, and it is unlikely there could have been such violent dissensions as to cause the emperor to take drastic action against the offenders unless there had been already established an active and numerous Christian group. This must have been about A.D. 49, less than twenty years after the crucifixion of Jesus, and long before Paul's arrival there. Certainly it was not Paul, or any of the known apostles, who introduced the belief in Jesus as the Christ into Rome. It must have been by a spontaneous popular development that Christianity, in its primitive sense, was given its start, and a commanding start in Rome. And if in Rome it is a reasonable assumption that the same influences were early at work elsewhere in the empire. Virtually nothing is known of how Christianity developed in its initial stages, save in Palestine and the region traversed by Paul and his associates, as recorded in The Acts. Yet it is clear that early in the second century Alexandria had already become a center of Christian activity, and there is nothing to account for it except the tradition that Mark went there as a missionary. It is certain that within a short time Christianity was established in every part of the

[3]Suetonius, Claudius 25.

empire, and there can be no doubt that everywhere, as in Damascus, as in Antioch and as in Rome, the beginnings of that development were in the Jewish synagogues of the dispersion where, as in Jerusalem, it was at first assumed that the question of Jesus and his messianic mission was exclusively a Jewish affair, in which Gentiles could have no part save as they became full proselytes of Judaism.

It seems evident, however, that the expansion of the movement to include the Gentiles was also in its beginnings more or less spontaneous. It appears that everywhere irresistible influences were at work to reach the Gentiles, through the Jews, and particularly and actively through their gentile proselytes. "It is important to remember," says Dr. Ernest F. Scott, "that Paul did not begin the gentile mission, as has often been assumed. Before he appeared on the scene it had been inaugurated and seems to have been made considerable progress. All the time that he was carrying on his great work there were other missionaries, hardly less zealous and successful, who were devoting themselves, as he had done, to the conversion of the Gentiles. It may be confidently affirmed that even without Paul the gentile mission would have gone forward. That Christianity became a universal religion was no historical accident, due to the effort of one extraordinary man. The impulse to the mission lay in the character of the gospel itself. It was a universal message, and was bound in course of time to force its way through all barriers and make its appeal to the world at large."[4]

That in no sense disparages the accomplishments of Paul. He was the incomparable leader of the gentile movement. He gave it form and direction as did no other. He perceived more clearly than anyone the essential universality of the gospel message and the vastness of its implications. He doubtless spread his personal mission over more territory and influenced more people than any other. And in his epistles he left a priceless legacy for all time. Nevertheless, it is true, as Dr. Scott says, that the expansion of the religion of Jesus to embrace the gentile world was inevitable, and would somehow have been accomplished if

[4]The Gospel and Its Tributaries, pp. 132, 133.

Paul had never existed. The way had been prepared for it, the seeds were implanted within the gospel, and nothing could have prevented their growth and fruitage.

But this expansion into the gentile field gradually alienated Jewish sympathy and support. As the gentile element increased and became more and more predominant, the ideas about Jesus were given the coloring of Hellenistic philosophy repugnant to Jewish thought. Christianity was no longer a Jewish sect but a new religion. The Pharisees in the days of Jesus had perceived the danger to Judaism in the teachings of Jesus, and while they could not have imagined the vast results of his work, their instinctive opposition foreshadowed the later conflict. The religion of Jesus had its origin in the Jews. It had its roots in the Jewish Scriptures. Jesus himself was a Jew, as were all of his disciples. For several years after his crucifixion the Christian fellowship was exclusively Jewish, admitting only full proselytes to Judaism of those of other races. The Christian movement, as we have said, had its start, all over the empire, in the Jewish synagogues. But when the way was opened for the inclusion of Gentiles the Jews began to draw back. They could not accept the teaching of Paul that Jesus had superseded the Law. And when the control and direction passed from their hands into the hands of the Gentiles and the conception of the religion of Jesus became more and more Greek and less and less Jewish, the movement ceased to draw Jewish adherents, and gradually the Jewish elements in it disappeared. No Jewish leaders appear after the close of the first century. In the direction the religion had taken Jews could not follow and continue to be Jews. They had launched a great ship but the flag at its masthead was not theirs.

Chapter XXIX

CONFLICT AND PERSECUTION

Yet with all these favorable circumstances the progress of the Christian movement was not without difficulties. There arose obstacles in its path that from time to time became very formidable. The more important of these obstacles were political and doctrinal.

Doctrinal differences began to appear very soon after the death of Jesus. The beliefs of the disciples and their immediate followers were very simple. Being Jews, all of them, they found no difficulty in supplementing their attachment to Judaism with the conviction that Jesus was the long-expected Messiah and that he would soon return to fulfill the promises of God to the fathers. The first converts were not bothered with doctrines. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."[1] That apparently was the sum and substance of required faith.

It was not long, however, before there began to develop strong differences of opinion over the implications of this faith, and these conflicts grew in number, variety, and intensity when the movement entered into the gentile world. The first conflict, of course, was over the admission of Gentiles to the fellowship without compliance with the ritual requirements of Judaism, and evidently it was rather violent while it lasted but it did not last long. The Gentiles not only came in, aided greatly by the ministry of Paul, but they soon, by sheer force of numbers and greater broadness of vision, took possession of it. This in turn created new conflicts, for it was inevitable that the personality and the teachings upon which Christianity is based, should, when carried over into the larger field, be interpreted in accordance with the ideas prevalent in that field, ideas which were importantly influenced by the terms and methods of Hellenistic philosophy, and out of the differences of opinion arising from the efforts so to interpret the phenomenon of Jesus in the light of

[1]Acts 16:31.

such philosophy arose varying and conflicting doctrines that kept Christianity at war with itself for several centuries.

To the Jewish Christians Jesus was a man, a human being, chosen by God to be the long-expected Messiah. But contrary to racial anticipations he was not a political leader, a material king. Rather he was one who fulfilled the messianic prophecies of Isaiah, a suffering servant, a sacrificial offering for the atonement of the sins of men, and the way of salvation lay through belief in him as God's anointed Son. We have seen that Jesus regarded himself as the suffering servant of Isaiah's prophecy, and went to his death in the conviction that he was thereby carrying out the messianic rôle described in those prophetic writings. The disciples had heard him so declare, and although they did not understand him at the time they fully realized the significance of his words after the resurrection. That recognition is indicated in the first exhortations of Peter after Pentecost and the idea of Jesus as the atoning sacrifice, who suffered for the iniquities of men and by whose stripes men were healed,[2] became the basic conception of the Christian religion, permanently symbolized in the sacramental rite, and however enveloped in mystical speculations by Hellenistic thought applied to it later it continued to be basic.

It seems to have been enough for the disciples and the early Jewish converts that Jesus, who had been a man among men, had through his death and resurrection fulfilled certain messianic prophecies to the letter and had thereby become the divine agency for the redemption of the race. His translation from the human to the divine through death appeared to them to be a process quite within their understanding. At any rate they apparently did not indulge in speculations about it, but accepted it as a fact accomplished, something quite within the powers of God and in accord with his promises to their fathers. There was no problem for them in the historical Jesus, the man who had lived among them, with whom many of them had been intimately associated in life. To be sure, they believed that he had been chosen by God for the messianic distinction, had been

[2]Isaiah 53:5.

declared his anointed Son and had been endowed with supernatural powers as well as authority while still in the flesh, but that did not make him any the less a man, or more than man. All the varying notions of the Messiah—most of them, as we have seen, visioning a material being with purely material and political functions, a leader of the line of David—took it for granted that he would have a peculiar relation with God, that he would be, indeed, God's vicegerent on earth. They were accustomed, therefore, to the idea of the natural and the supernatural merged in the person of the Messiah, and while the Messiah as he appeared in the person of Jesus was quite different in most respects from the common expectation, it presented no difference in this particular. Jesus of Nazareth, as Peter said, "was a man approved of God among you" to be "raised up" to become the Christ, the Messiah.[3]

While all this was comparatively simple to the Jewish mind it was not so to the gentile mind. To the Gentiles, says McGiffert, "the messiahship of Jesus meant nothing—the messianic hope was too strictly national to appeal to others than Jews—but the figure of a dying and risen Savior was something they could understand. . . . That he was called *Christos*, the Greek word for Messiah or Anointed One, made no difference. The title so full of significance to Jews carried no meaning to Gentiles. To the latter it was no more than a proper name. They were interested not in a Jewish national Messiah but in a personal Savior; not in Jesus the Christ but in Jesus Christ, or Christ Jesus the Lord."[4] And such a Savior, to their way of thinking, must be himself a God. They could not imagine even the historical Jesus being simply a man, however divinely endowed. The confirmed monotheism of the Jews was foreign to their habits of thought. They were accustomed to the recognition of many gods, even to the deification of the living Roman emperor, and they saw nothing incongruous in attributing deity to Jesus, which the Jews had not thought of doing, although Paul had come pretty close to it. Nevertheless, in accepting the Christian religion they were

[3]Acts 2:22, 24, 36.
[4]History of Christian Thought, Vol. I, pp. 18, 19.

obliged to accept the Jewish conception of God, the God of Jesus, the one and only God, creator of all things and the divine Father of men. How to reconcile this with the deified Jesus was a problem that exercised the minds of the gentile Christians for centuries and many mystical theories were developed, and many fierce controversies grew out of them, which did not cease until a satisfactory formula was found in the doctrine of the Trinity.

This is, of course, an oversimplification of the causes of the conflicts of thought over the nature of the person of Jesus and his relation to God and to men, but it is far from the purpose of this work to enter into the labyrinth of doctrinal speculation and the gradual development of Christian dogma in the ages following the apostolic period. They are referred to briefly here, and hereafter, because they were important factors in the Christian movement and in the evolution of the Christian church.

But still more formidable was the obstacle of political opposition from the powers of Rome which at times rose to the heights of widespread and cruel persecution. That persecution was general and virtually continuous throughout most of the years of the first three centuries is a mistaken impression. Persecution of the Christians, indeed, was general throughout the empire in only a few brief periods, and these were caused rather by political exigencies than by ferocious antagonism to the Christian religion. There were, however, many local or regional persecutions, sometimes initiated by the authorities, sometimes arising from popular opposition, and there were numerous prosecutions and executions of individual Christians under the operations of Roman law. Seldom was there a time during these three hundred years when a Christian could feel that his life or his property was safe.

Happily this insecurity was not so great in the first century, although it was marked by the destruction of Christians in Rome at the command of Nero and of cruel attacks upon them elsewhere, with executions of many of them, as in the case of James the brother of John,[5] of Paul, who left an account of the cruelties he had suffered,[6] and, according to tradition, of numerous

[5] Acts 12:2.
[6] 2 Corinthians 11:23-27.

others, including Peter. Even in the first century, therefore, it was far from an easy way for the Christians. But with the exception of the Neronian outburst Roman authorities were not in this period definitely antagonistic. Even the persecutions of Nero were not against the Christian religion, about which Caesar knew nothing, but against the Christians as alleged incendiaries. Generally they were regarded, for a considerable time, as merely a sect of the Jews, which in the beginning they were, and the religion of the Jews was a "religio licita," a privileged or licensed religion, formally recognized and sanctioned by the Roman law. When the Jews brought Paul before Gallio, the Roman deputy at Achaia, charging that he "persuaded men to worship God contrary to the law," that official said to them: "If it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdness, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you. But if it be a question of words and names, and of your law, look ye to it, for I will be no judge of such matters."[7] That seems to have been the attitude of Roman officials so long as this impression prevailed. But when it became clear that Christianity was a distinct religion, one that had no right to existence under the Roman law, that attitude changed, and as it grew in numbers and became increasingly a problem of control, official opposition became increasingly strong, and from time to time the mighty power of Rome was exercised to the fullest extent in the efforts to suppress it.

The persecution of the Christians at Rome by Nero—because it was the first general attack upon them as well as one of the most violent, although entirely local; and because it brought the Christians definitely and unmistakably into the pages of profane history for the first time—has an important place in the annals of the Christian religion. In A.D. 64 a great fire destroyed the larger part of the City of Rome. The people were appalled by the calamity. Many regarded it as an infliction of the gods in punishment for the excesses of Nero. Many believed the current rumor that Nero himself had started it. How the Christians came to be held responsible is not clear. Only thirty-four years had passed since the death of Jesus. While the fact that

[7]Acts 18:13-15.

the Christians in Rome had by this time become numerous enough to attract public attention is striking evidence of the rapid growth of Christianity, it is difficult to believe that there was already a "great multitude" of them in Rome as Tacitus asserts. It is obvious, however, that there were many of them, and that they had made themselves unpopular among their pagan neighbors by their repudiation of all the gods in favor there, their social as well as religious exclusiveness, their secret meetings, and their unconcealed condemnation of idolatrous practices. It is not improbable also, as Ferrero, the Italian historian, suggests, that the Christians attracted attention to themselves by the satisfaction or indifference which they showed in relation to the fire, and thus aided in diverting public suspicion from Nero to them.[8] However it came about, they were charged with the crime, and Tacitus says that Nero "inflicted the most exquisite tortures on those men who, under the vulgar appellation of Christians, were already branded with deserved infamy. They derived their name and origin from Christ, who in the reign of Tiberius had suffered death by the sentence of the procurator Pontius Pilate. . . . The confessions of those who were seized discovered a great multitude of their accomplices, and they were all convicted, not so much for the crime of setting fire to the city as for their hatred of human kind. They died in torments, and their torments were embittered by insult and derision. Some were nailed on crosses; others sewn up in the skins of wild beasts and exposed to the fury of dogs; others again, smeared over with combustible materials, were used to illuminate the darkness of the night."[9]

That some of the weaker ones among the Christians were forced by torture to confess to crimes they did not commit is quite possible, but subsequent ages have refused to believe that they were in any way responsible for the conflagration. Such a charge is so foreign to every teaching, every moral principle, of Christianity, that it is inconceivable that it could be truthfully applied to them. But the words of Tacitus show how completely

[8] Short History of Rome, Vol. II, p. 213.
[9] Annals XV, pp. 38-44.

mistaken could be the public impression of their character and tenets, an impression that long persisted and that caused many a later persecution.

However, this was, as we have said, a local persecution and apparently did not extend beyond Rome and its immediate environs. Moreover, while the practices of their religion, and the peculiar place it gave to them in the community, may have directed suspicion to them in this instance, the religion was not in itself the object of persecution, as it was in later times. The later difficulties of the Christians in their relation to the pagan civilization of Rome arose primarily from the facts that their religion was not recognized by Roman law; that it forbade any participation in the social life of the people among whom they lived which involved recognition in one way or another of their gods, or any concessions to the pagan religions or deities in the way of offerings. One could hardly sit down at the same table with another without joining in the customary libations of the household or of the pagan group in attendance, and no Christian could pay tribute or bow to any deity other than his own. This was an exclusiveness the Roman world was unable to understand, and it implied, and often expressed, a condemnation of all other forms of religion that was bitterly resented. Moreover, the secrecy of the Christian gatherings, made necessary by their proscription, encouraged the suspicion of nameless practices abhorrent even to the dissolute society of the age. Lacking the protection of the law they were doubtless subject to many forms of private persecution, and were constantly in danger of being brought before the Roman authorities upon the mere charge of being Christians and therefore, ipso facto, criminals.

The celebrated letter of Pliny the Younger to the Emperor Trajan, written about A.D. 112, reveals the perplexity of one Roman governor as to the proper treatment to be accorded the Christians. Pliny at that time was governor of the province of Bithynia, in Asia Minor, and he wrote to Trajan for advice and instructions. It is evident from his letter that the Christian religion had gained numerous adherents there. "Many persons, of every age, of every rank, of both sexes even, are daily involved,

and will be, since not in the cities only but in villages and country districts as well, has spread the contagion of that superstition." He implies that the pagan temples had been "almost deserted" and their customary rites "intermitted." Having had no previous experience in Christian trials, he says, he had adopted the following procedure in dealing with the cases brought before him. "I asked themselves whether they were Christians. If they admitted it, I put the question a second time and a third, with threats of punishment. If they persisted in their confession I ordered them to be led to execution, for I had no doubt that whatever the nature of that which they confessed, in any case their pertinacity and inflexible obstinacy deserved to be punished." The number reported to him increasing he had sought to deal with the problem by clemency to those who would abjure the Christian religion and pay obeisance to the gods, particularly the figure of the deified emperor. He found that those who did this claimed that "the sum of their crime or error was that they had been wont to meet together on a fixed day before daybreak and to repeat among themselves in turn a hymn to Christ as to a god, and to bind themselves by an oath not for some wickedness, but not to commit theft, not to commit robbery, not to commit adultery, not to break their word, not to deny a deposit when demanded; these things duly done, it had been their custom to disperse and to meet again to take food, of an ordinary and harmless kind." Pursuing his investigations further Pliny examined two women who were called deaconesses, and even subjected them to torture, but he says he "found nothing but a perverse and extravagant superstition."

Obviously he had found that these people were committed to honesty and chastity and apart from their "perverse superstition" had done no wrong. In response to Pliny's inquiry Trajan approved his procedure and instructed him that "the Christians are not to be sought; if reported and convicted they are to be punished, with this reservation; that any person who denies that he is a Christian and confirms his testimony by overt act, that is, by worshiping our gods, however suspect he may have been in the past, shall obtain pardon by penitence."

It is evident from this correspondence that less than eighty years after the death of Jesus the Christian religion was already making serious inroads upon the pagan religions; that despite the seclusion of their worship and the blamelessness of the lives of its followers it was arousing strenuous opposition, particularly, we may suppose, from the priests and other guardians of the temples and shrines; and that it was affecting all classes of society. It is a quite common impression that Christianity in its early years drew its adherents almost wholly from the poorer elements of the people in the Roman world, and especially from the slaves. It is doubtless true that such elements contributed much the larger part of the Christian fellowship, and naturally so, for it was a religion of sympathy and understanding that received them into its arms upon equal terms with the higher classes, and held out to them, as to others, a glorious hope. To the slaves it must have been particularly alluring, and we need to remember that the slaves included great numbers in whose veins flowed the pure blood of the civilized races of the empire. Much of the highest and finest intelligence of Rome in those days was found in its slaves—Epictetus, for example. But it is plain from the official statement of Pliny that the Christian religion was by no means confined to these classes. He had found that the movement embraced persons of "every rank," a comprehensive phrase which he must have meant to include persons of the highest class as well as those of the middle classes, and it is significant that he mentions some who were brought before him charged with being Christians who were Roman citizens, a distinction which placed them beyond his jurisdiction and required him to transfer their cases to Rome, as Festus was obliged to do in the case of Paul. It seems obvious, moreover, that if the Christians were drawn exclusively, or almost exclusively, from the lowest elements of the population Pliny would not have been so disturbed as he evidently was by the problem that confronted him. The people who were being drawn away from the recognized religions to this illicit cult were to some extent at least of a quality that aroused official concern. A "contagion" that was affecting "all ranks" of society could hardly be ig-

nored. Furthermore, it presented a political danger. For to whatever gods a man might pay his devotions it had by this time become essential that he pay divine homage to the emperor. This was a sign and a test of loyalty to Rome, something in the nature of an oath of allegiance. One who neglected to bow before the imperial image incurred suspicion and one who refused to do so was subject to punishment. To the Christians this was a form of idolatry, and to renounce all idolatry was a fundamental requirement of their religion. While the Christians were not in the least seditious, while they were orderly and generally exceptionally submissive to the law, their willingness to suffer, even to die, rather than to worship the pagan gods, or even to pay obeisance to a deified emperor, was such an extraordinary attitude in the Roman world that it seemed utterly unreasonable to Roman officials, a perverse obstinancy that sorely tried their patience and stirred their antagonism, not only because they regarded it as "extravagant superstition" but one whose principles were, from their viewpoint, inherently disloyal.

Nevertheless, the procedure of Pliny and the instructions of Trajan, one of the wisest of the Roman rulers, were inclined to moderation. The Christians were not to be sought out. There should be no campaign against them by the forces of law. Anonymous charges against them should be ignored. However, specific charges by identified accusers should be given trial and if the charges were sustained punishment should be inflicted. But clemency should be granted to any so charged who would demonstrate penitence by worshiping the gods. Neither the action of Pliny nor the instructions of Trajan indicated any disposition to persecute the Christians, but the mere fact that they practiced a religion not authorized by law, accentuated by the further fact that they condemned all other religions than their own, refused to recognize other gods, and in particular refused to yield to the requirement of homage to the deified emperor, made them subject to prosecution as violators of the law and to the punishment, on conviction, ordered by the constituted Roman authorities.

It was not until the reign of Marcus Aurelius (A.D. 161 to 180) that actual persecution of the Christians at the command of the emperor was inaugurated. It was therefore almost a century and a half after the crucifixion of Jesus that Christianity entered upon its most difficult period which with intermissions lasted more than one hundred years. It is surpassingly strange that the man who stands out above all other imperial rulers for his lofty ethics, his benign administration and his virtuous life, should have stained his otherwise glorious record with Christian persecution, and have been the first emperor to enter upon a systematic campaign against them, marked by all the cruelties of such a campaign in an age when cruelty to offenders still characterized Roman rule. But the empire at this time was oppressed by a terrible plague which destroyed great numbers of people, and sorely troubled by invasions of the barbaric hordes of the North, which it took all the energy and ability of the emperor to overcome. The pagan population looked upon these calamities as visitations of the gods upon them, and, as in the time of Nero, it was not difficult for the people to imagine that the spread of Christianity was the cause of them. Stoic philosopher though he was, and ordinarily just in all his dealings with his subjects, Marcus Aurelius had the intolerant prejudices of his class and looked upon the Christians as "philosophically contemptible, politically subversive and morally abominable." And while he disdained all superstition he was not insensible to the appeal of the populace for the extermination of the Christians. Obviously he had no understanding of the real principles and purposes of Christianity, in its ethical aspects so like his own. Whatever his reasons, or the influences which persuaded him to action, he authorized a widespread attack upon the Christians in general in the course of which such distinguished Christians as Justin and Polycarp suffered martyrdom together with many others.

The successor of Marcus Aurelius, Commodus, was too much engrossed in his own pleasures to bother with the Christians, and while they no doubt suffered from the continuous operation of the law and from local persecutions, there was thereafter no

extensive outbreak against them until the time of Septimius Severus, who in A.D. 202 issued an edict forbidding them to make converts and thereby encouraged public opposition to them. A more general campaign against them than any that had preceded it developed in the reign of Decius, beginning in A.D. 250, which became still fiercer under Valerian in A.D. 257, the people being again incited by public calamities, and the emperor by the increasing conviction that the Christians were becoming a positive danger to the state. After Valerian, however, there was comparative immunity for the Christians for almost half a century until the twentieth year of the reign of Diocletian (A.D. 303) when that vigorous ruler, impressed no doubt with the conviction that Christianity was wholly incompatible with the Roman state, determined to suppress it. Apparently he did not wish in the beginning to destroy life, contenting himself with an edict forbidding the meetings of Christians, the destruction of their churches and their books, the confiscation of their property and their exclusion from public office. A little later he ordered imprisoned all bishops, priests, and deacons who refused to give up their sacred books, and in a third edict while offering general amnesty to Christians who would publicly manifest abandonment of their religion he decreed that to those who refused or failed to do this severe punishment would be inflicted. The persecution which followed, upon Christian resistance to these commands, lasted for eight years, and it was the greatest and most destructive of all, although unequally pressed, being most violent and longest continued in the East while in some provinces of the West it was hardly felt.

But it was also the last persecution. For over a century the Roman government had engaged from time to time in the effort to extinguish Christianity, and all such efforts had failed. They had, indeed, in every instance stimulated the growth of the faith. The effort of Diocletian, bloody as it was, unparalleled in its destruction of persons and property, not only strengthened the church physically but strengthened its opposition to the domination of the Roman state. It was but a few years later (A.D. 313) that Constantine, having placed himself upon the im-

perial throne, in association with Licinius, issued the famous Edict of Milan which decreed universal toleration in religion, for the first time in the world's history. "We have long seen," it said, "that we have no business to refuse freedom of religion. The power of seeing to matters of belief must be left to the judgment and desire of each individual according to the man's own free will." This, of course, was a declaration of amnesty to the Christians. Moreover, it commanded the restoration of the property of the churches confiscated in the Diocletian persecution, and in effect recognized Christianity as a legal religion, thereby relieving it of the legal disabilities which had hitherto been imposed upon it. That was not all. Constantine, whatever his motives may have been, attached himself to the cause of the Christian religion, gave it the weight of his influence, made it highly privileged among existing religions, and contributed greatly to its unity, in the West at any rate, by calling together the heads of the church in the Council of Nicea (A.D. 325), where the familiar Nicene Creed was adopted. It was not, however, until 60 years yater (A.D. 381), under Theodosius, that Christianity was made the official religion of the empire, and the Nicene Creed the basis of its faith.

Christianity at last had triumphed over Rome. There was a brief period of a few months when Julian, in A.D. 361, made a feeble effort to restore paganism. But that was the last expiring flame of the Roman opposition. It may not be true that Julian in the recognition of his failure cried, "Oh, Galilean, thou hast conquered," but the words express what was literally the truth.

Chapter XXX

DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHURCH

Unquestionably the instrument with which Christianity maintained itself through all the years of conflict, the instrument which made its ultimate triumph over all obstacles possible, was the church. The church, indeed, was organized Christianity. It is inconceivable that the Christian religion could have made the progress it did make without organization, system, leadership and unity—none of these in perfection at any time, but all of them essential to the success of any social movement. Society has always found some sort of organization necessary to its protection and the promotion of its welfare. In any state of civilization men must have leadership, direction, accepted systems of control and action, if common purposes are to be attained and common interests promoted. And what is true of society in general is true of any group within society that seeks to make its aims effective. The Christian movement must have dissipated its energies after its first flush of enthusiasm if it had lacked the cohesiveness which only organization can give. Even if we assume divine guidance it is only through men, through the leadership of men united for common purposes, that such guardianship can be manifested.

As we have said, the church was an outgrowth, an inevitable outgrowth, of these necessities. There are no signs of deliberate organization in the initial stages of the movement by the apostles. Leadership there was, to be sure, but it was directed solely to the task of proclaiming the revelation of Jesus as the Messiah. But as groups within Jerusalem and elsewhere were converted to the faith, need of means of holding them together and of providing for their continuous religious instruction and the common service became manifest. The first step in this direction was the selection of a certain number from among the group at Jerusalem, among whom Stephen was one, to serve the needs of the poor, some of whom it appeared were being neglected in

the individual ministrations. From the very beginnings, actuated by the spirit and the teachings of Jesus, charity was an outstanding obligation of the religion, and through all the subsequent years of trial it continued to be so, constituting a virtue and an activity which set Christianity apart from all the religions of paganism. The duty of helping one another, where help was needed, was paramount, and that in itself was a strong influence for unity. It was not merely the duty of each individual, it was the duty of the group as a whole; and in order to act for the group in this service certain persons were appointed as servers, or servants, of the congregation, who in later times were given other duties. To these were then applied the Greek word for servants, deacons.

It was but natural, the origins of the church being what they were, that the terms and methods of organization in the synagogue should be tentatively applied. Every synagogue was under the direction of its "elders," men chosen because of their age and religious standing for this purpose. And so as Christian groups began to be formed they were placed under the control of elders. The first reference to such appointments is that wherein it is stated that Paul and Barnabas "ordained them elders in every church."[1] With the spread of the religion among the Gentiles the Greek word for elder, "presbyter," came into use, and apparently later the term "bishop," meaning "overseer," began to be applied as an alternative title. In early usage elders, presbyters, and bishops seem to have been interchangeable terms for the same office.[2] Naturally, however, in any group of elders or presbyters one of their number attained or was given leadership, and as organization progressed the title of bishop was reserved to that one who presided over them. So, it appears, there was gradually developed a system of churches, each with a presiding bishop and a number of presbyters and deacons. It also appears that the word "church" was applied to all the Christians in any community collectively, rather than to each individual group of Christians in such community, if there were such.

[1] Acts 14:23.
[2] Walker, History of the Christian Church, p. 46.

The "church at Antioch" or Smyrna or Ephesus or Rome, "the seven churches which are in Asia," seem to have been the common designation. That, to be sure, may have been a collective application of the term which did not prevent its use in relation to individual congregations, just as it is used now in a general as well as a particular sense, but the fact remains that references to the church in the early records universally indicate a community, collective, fellowship. Certain it is that when "bishop" emerges as a distinctive title it is applied to an official whose jurisdiction embraces an entire city and its environs.

This process of organizational development seems to have been universal throughout the empire wherever the Christian religion was established. First, for each church, a number of elders or presbyters, with a number of helpers or deacons. This was a simple and democratic presbyterial organization. These officers were all laymen. There was as yet no professional clergy. The services were simple, on the order of those in the synagogues—prayers, hymns, a reading from the Scriptures, an edifying talk by anyone respected for his ability and character, and always the sacrament, the one feature of the service that distinguished it from the procedure common in the synagogues.[3] Even the itinerant missionaries, "apostles" or "prophets" as they were called, were unpaid.[4] When, however, one of the presbyters was given authority over the others, and the title of bishop began to be applied exclusively to this ruling office, the organization became "episcopal," governed, that is to say, by an "episcopos," the Greek word for overseer, "bishop" being the English rendering of the word. It thus passed from the democratic presbyterial form to the authoritarian or "monarchical" form of church government. Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, writing to the church at Magnesia, early in the second century, says: "I exhort you that ye study to do all things in divine concord, your bishop presiding in the place of God, your presbyters in the place of the council of the apostles, and your deacons, most dear to me,

[3] Justin, Apology, 67.
[4] Didache.

being entrusted with the ministry of Jesus Christ."[5] There is thus revealed, within less than a century after the crucifixion of Jesus, the conception of the bishop as the supreme authority in each church or diocese, to which all should yield spiritual subjection, that became universally dominant in the Christian organization. This in turn led gradually to the establishment of a professional clergy, supported by the church. It was Ignatius, by the way, who first, so far as is known, applied the term catholic, or general, to the church as a whole.[6]

This transition from the democratic to the monarchical form of organization was impelled primarily by the dissensions within the churches growing out of doctrinal differences. It is necessary to remember that the church in the early stages was without any written sources of information or interpretation. The written Gospels were not in general use, and accepted as authoritative Scripture, until a time somewhat later than the days of Ignatius, although the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke and the Epistles of Paul were earlier being referred to as sources of authority. Ignatius, for example, quotes sayings of Jesus from Matthew and Luke and some extracts from Pauline Epistles but the Old Testament is still exclusively "the Scriptures." "At first the word 'Gospel' was not associated with a written book. The message of Jesus was proclaimed by word of mouth, each instructor reporting it in his own fashion; and all these accounts of it were known as 'the Gospel.'"[7] At first, indeed, it was not felt that there was any need for written Gospels, or for elaborate organization, the coming of Christ anew, and in full glory and power, being momentarily expected. But as time went on and it began to be realized that his coming might be indefinitely deferred, the necessity was perceived of written records to take the place of the oral messages from those "witnesses" of the facts of Jesus who were rapidly passing from earth. It was in part to meet this need that written Gospels began to appear, not only those with which we are familiar, but others.

[5] Epistle to Magnesians, 2:4, 5.
[6] Smyrneans, 3:4.
[7] Scott, Literature of the New Testament, p. 288.

Meanwhile numerous missionaries, whether accredited apostles, "prophets," or teachers (there seem to have been three degrees of these proselyting agencies) were traveling about the empire, each proclaiming "the gospel" in his own way, and giving his own interpretation of its meanings. Naturally this diversity of teachers created diversity of teaching, in the absence of any written authority commonly accepted as scriptural, and gave rise to more or less violent differences of opinion, not only as to interpretations but as to the relative merits of leaders. Paul records the divisions of the church at Corinth, one saying, I am a follower of Paul, another I am of Apollos, another I am of Cephas.[8] At the same time were developing in the gentile field of Christianity those speculative doctrinal theories which fomented still graver and more widespread discord, and which continued until long after the written Gospels and the Epistles were in common circulation and use.

In view of the circumstances it is easy to understand how these differences could honestly arise, and yet how detrimental they were to the unity and progress of the Christian movement. There was a serious danger of Christianity breaking up into diverse and strongly opposing sects, which would have been fatal to its purposes in those years of struggle. It is a quite common impression that the early church developed in an atmosphere of preternatural harmony. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Paul, as noted above, speaks of the contentions in the church at Corinth. Some of the later books of the New Testament canon (2 Peter, 2 John and Jude, in particular) are devoted largely to condemnation of "false teachings" that evidently were pervading the churches and causing strife. The epistles of Clement of Rome to the Corinthians were occasioned by reports of dissensions which obviously the earlier efforts of Paul had not permanently quieted. The nature of the "false teachings" in these first writings referring to them is not made clear, but it is plain from the stern denunciation of them that they were disturbing and disrupting influences that caused grave concern. In the writings appearing a little later the character of the "false

[8] 1 Cor. 1:12.

teachings" prevalent then, is disclosed, and presumably they were the outgrowth or the crystallization of the earlier differences of opinion.

That there was urgent need for a unity of faith and purpose was evidently becoming manifest by the end of the first century, and the development of a new form of organization giving to one man in each church specific authority over that church was apparently regarded as a necessary means to the promotion of unity and the elimination of internal dissensions. When Clement wrote his epistles to the Corinthians, about A.D. 97, each church then, it appears, was still governed, but loosely and inadequately, by a group or council of elders or presbyters. But when Ignatius wrote his epistles, about A.D. 120, we find a presiding bishop at Corinth as well as at other churches to which he directed his letters. It thus seems that within this brief period a transformation had been effected, at least in the region he addressed, the presbyterial form passing out and the "monarchical" form coming in. The primary purpose of the epistles of Ignatius is obviously to promote congregational subjection to the authorities of the church, particularly the bishop, and thereby to establish harmony, "divine concord," within the church. The development of this system must have met with common approval throughout the empire for it was soon a fixed order everywhere.

But each church was still an independent unit, and each sovereign bishop exercised his authority, as to matters of faith or belief as well as to methods of administration, according to his personal views of propriety. Correspondence between such bishops, seeking advice or assistance from one another, gradually led, we may suppose, to the practice, which soon appears, of regional conferences of bishops, or synods, which had the effect of promoting uniformity in the conduct of church affairs and to some extent in the fundamental tenets of Christian faith, in the area affected by such conferences. But the attainment of full authority of practice or opinion was yet far away.

We are apt to think of these early bishops as dignitaries endowed with the power and splendor which much later attended the office. But we have to remember that the great majority

of Christians at this time were poor; that however liberal their offerings the necessity of more or less secrecy in their gatherings made any material display impracticable. They had to worship in places where least attention would be attracted to them. In Rome their gatherings were usually underground. The catacombs bear abundant evidence of long and extensive use of these subterranean passages and chambers for Christian gatherings. In other cities they used whatever rooms or open-air spaces were available where they would be reasonably free from public observation. Obviously they could build no churches. Apparently, in time, some of the churches found it possible to acquire property, burial grounds and inconspicuous buildings for church use, presumably by various expedients of concealment, such as the burial guilds and other guilds that were common in that period; for the edict of Diocletian called for the destruction or confiscation of churches and other physical property of the Christians. But this was well along toward the end of the third century, and it was not until Constantine, but a few years later, removed the ban of the law against them, that they began to build real churches, designed specifically for the uses of church service. Church architecture, according to authorities on that subject, began with Constantine.[9]

It is evident, therefore, that during the first three centuries the office of bishop bore none of the marks of grandeur either in garb or in ceremonials that later distinguished it. On the contrary, the bishops, as the leaders of a proscribed sect, must have found it necessary to be as inconspicuous as was consistent with the performance of their duties. They were courageous men. They had to be to accept such responsibilities. For as leaders they were particular objects of attack, whether in the ordinary course of enforcement of the law against Christians or in the fury of persecutions, and many of them suffered martyrdom because of their dangerous distinction, Ignatius and Polycarp for example. They had power, to be sure, within the organization of which they were the heads, and within their respective jurisdictions, and some of them, of exceptional abilities or zeal, had

[9]Fletcher, History of Architecture, pp. 200, 201.

influence far beyond the limitations of their own churches, but it was a moral and spiritual power, devoid of the material trappings of rank.

All this, of course, was true in relative degrees, with the minor officials of the church, the elders and deacons. A religion that had to exist in the dark, so to speak, that was in constant peril of murderous attack, could not very well acclaim itself by any unnecessary display. To carry on its work effectively—and truly it did carry it on with marvelous effectiveness, as its rapid and large growth proved—it had to labor quietly, unobtrusively, drawing adherents from the pagan population by personal contacts rather than by public exhortations. This was not so in the first stages of the movement, when Paul and other missionaries spoke boldly from the market places, but as has been previously explained these conditions of freedom and comparative immunity soon disappeared.

Another influence in the development of a more rigid organization of the churches was the necessity for unity in order to withstand the persecutions which constantly oppressed them, and now and then threatened their very existence. The persecutions were in themselves strong incentives to unity, for facing a common peril the Christians were insensibly drawn closer together by the needs as well as the emotions of a common cause. But even so the conditions demanded stronger leadership and greater concentration, and this, while each church was as independent in its thinking and its teachings as it was in its jurisdiction, was for the time being unattainable. "As yet there was no recognized machinery by which the church could arrive at an agreement and enforce the common decision. Church councils such as fixed the accepted creed at a later time were out of the question. . . . In the days of the persecutions a general council was impossible."[10] Yet notwithstanding the differences of opinion that continued to exist and that created fierce divisions over relatively minor matters, they were one in the fact that all based their teachings and their worship upon the personality of Jesus Christ, they were all followers of one "Lord and Master," they

[10]Scott, The Gospel and Its Tributaries.

were all members of a common fellowship, and everywhere alike they were subject to the penalties of the Roman law and the object of pagan prejudices. This was the bond of unity that made Christianity as a whole an invincible force, despite its conflicts within itself and its struggles with the power of Rome. Yet because it seemed always in danger of being overwhelmed by that power, and its ability to resist always seemingly weakened by internal division, the pressure for more and more closely integrated organization, for a more definite and uniform statement of belief, continued. When after three centuries of triumphant tribulation it was at last relieved of its political disabilities, and with the authority of Constantine behind it a general council was convened at Nicea and a basic creed agreed upon, the main problem of uniformity was solved, tentatively at least, and the church started upon a new era of power, which now became political as well as spiritual, and rapidly accomplished the obliteration of paganism throughout the empire, the despised and persecuted religion becoming the dominating force.

That in this progressive development, necessary though it seems to have been, the church lost much of the spiritual quality that characterized its beginnings is not to be denied. The simplicity of faith, the democracy of organization and the freedom of opinion that marked the apostolic age, had been superseded by metaphysical doctrines, by authoritative direction and control, and by formalism in worship. Instead of a simple faith in Jesus as the Savior, a fervent trust emanating from the heart, the test of Christian fellowship became an intellectual acquiescence in a fixed definition of belief about Jesus.

Nevertheless, it is difficult to believe that the triumph of Christianity could have been accomplished without that development of organization in the course of which these changes appeared. Any organization requires rules and regulations, and such rules and regulations impose more or less restraint upon its members. There is no known way by which men can combine in a common cause, in a co-operative endeavor, without acquiescing in rules that are deemed essential to such co-operation or without assent to the leadership or direction provided. It may be plausibly

argued that the church in these centuries went much too far in organizational development, drifted too far from its primitive origins. But it is to be remembered that the church in this period was engaged in a spiritual war upon all fronts, with an antagonist of overwhelming power and devoid of mercy. That under those pressing circumstances Christianity could have survived without organization is inconceivable; and in view of the historical fact that Christianity not only survived but grew unceasingly and finally triumphed over all opposition, even that of imperial Rome, it seems unfair to criticize severely the agency by which, or with which, this was accomplished, whatever the defects of that agency may seem to have been as seen in the long perspective.

There is this to be said also. The apparent departures from the spirit and the ideals of Jesus were in form rather than in feeling, were superficial rather than basic. For how else account for the fact that the religion of Jesus, pure and undefiled, persisted through all these centuries, and beyond, in the hearts of many, perhaps of most, Christians; how else account for a Chrysostom, an Anselm, or a Francis of Assisi; how else account for the benefactions, the myriad charities, the constant helpfulness to the poor, the sick and the distressed, all in the spirit and in accord with the teachings of Jesus, that particularly distinguished the church in these and later centuries?

It is safe to say that the dissensions within the church over metaphysical doctrines did not have their origins in the thinking of the plain people who constituted the great mass of its adherents. Such speculations were beyond their comprehension and remote from their natural interest. That they could be persuaded that this or that formula of belief, however incomprehensible to them, was essential to their welfare is quite easy to believe, for that phenomenon of mass psychology is frequently observable in our own times; and so persuaded there is no doubt that they gave the force of numbers to any doctrine their respective leaders gave to them, particularly so when they had become accustomed to regard such leaders as divinely ordained and entrusted with authority.

But the simple faith in Jesus as the instrument of their salvation, the faith embodied in the Gospels, was something which they, even the most ignorant, could readily understand, and however it may have been wrapped within mystical doctrines, or garbed with ceremonial trappings, it continued to be the dominant feeling and motive in the hearts of the great body of believers. Their devotion to this faith through all those troublous centuries is beyond question. They did not resolutely face torture or death, and often suffer one or the other, or both, for an abstract doctrine, but for a concrete faith in Jesus Christ and the God for whom he stood as a divine alter ego.

Moreover, it was a faith that abounded in works. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another," the saying attributed to Jesus in the Gospel of John, was apparently taken literally as a practical and outward test of devotion, and was universally applied. Nothing is more impressive than the authentic evidences of Christian charity and mutual helpfulness in the centuries that were distinguished by persecution. Within the Christian fellowship everywhere, none were permitted to suffer without such alleviation as human kindness and generous sympathy could give. Gibbon has never been regarded as a partial critic of Christianity, but this is what he says of its good works: "A decent portion [of the regular collections] was reserved for the maintenance of the bishop and his clergy; a sufficient sum was allotted for the expenses of the public worship. . . . The whole remainder was the sacred patrimony of the poor. According to the discretion of the bishop, it was distributed to support widows and orphans, the lame, the sick and the aged of the community; to comfort strangers and pilgrims, and to alleviate the misfortunes of prisoners and captives, more especially when their sufferings had been occasioned by their firm attachment to the cause of religion. A generous intercourse of charity united the most distant provinces, and the smaller congregations were cheerfully assisted by the alms of their more opulent brethren."[11] Another secular historian, one of the present day, Ferrero, says on this subject, referring to

[11]Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, Vol. I, Chapter XV, p. 563.

conditions near the end of the third century, just before the final persecution by Diocletian, and when there had been almost fifty years of comparative immunity from oppression: "Everywhere Christian communities provided not only for the expense of their services and the maintenance of their ministers but for the assistance of widows, orphans, and the sick, the impotent, the old, the unemployed, for the succor of those who had been condemned in the service of God, for the ransom of prisoners taken captive by the barbarians, for the building of churches, for the care of slaves, for the burial of the poor, for hospitality to strangers of the same faith, and for subsidies to Christian communities which were in difficulties or in danger."[12]

The defenders of the early church, the "apologists," testify to these widespread and diverse activities of the brotherhood. There are frequent references to such charitable practices in The Acts and the Epistles of the New Testament writings, but they seem to have become more extensive and systematic in later years. Justin, writing about the middle of the second century, says: "What is collected is deposited with the president [the head or bishop of the church in each community] who succors the orphans and widows, and those who through sickness or any other cause are in want; and those who are in bonds, and the strangers sojourning among us, and, in a word, take care of all who are in need."[13] Tertullian, some fifty years later, writes: "It is our care for the helpless, our practice of loving kindness that brands us in the eyes of our opponents [the pagans]. Only look, they say, how they love one another!" And he goes on to describe the methods and scope of their charities: "Each of us puts in a small amount one day a month, or whenever he pleases [in most churches it was every week] but only if he pleases, for there is no compulsion in the matter, everyone contributing of his own free will. These monies are, as it were, the deposits of piety. They are expended upon no banquets or drinking bouts, or useless eating houses, but on feeding and burying poor people, on behalf of boys and girls who have neither parents

[12]Ferrero and Barbagallo, Short History of Rome, Vol. II, p. 379.
[13]Apology 1-67.

nor money, in support of old folk unable now to go about, as well as for people who are shipwrecked, or who may be in the mines (as enslaved workers) or exiled in islands, or in prison—so long as their distress is for the sake of God's fellowship, and they themselves entitled to maintenance by their confession," i.e., their membership in the church.[14]

Ferrero, in the quotation above, mentions relief of the unemployed. There is ample evidence not only that the church provided for the unemployed within the membership, but exercised its machinery to obtain employment for those who were out of work. The church, indeed, seemed to regard itself as incidentally an employment agency, or it was, as Harnack expresses it, "a union which provided work for those who were able to work and at the same time kept danger from those who were unfit for labor."[15] The church being composed largely of workers, the duty of work was constantly enjoined, not only for proper subsistence but in order to be able to contribute to the needs of the church and those whom it succored. But the evasion of work by those able to work when employment was offered was not countenanced. The stern admonition of Paul, "If any will not work neither let him eat,"[16] seems to have been the rule generally followed.

But helpfulness to all those within the Christian fellowship who were in need had been an institutional activity from the beginning. It will be remembered that it was for this that the first group of deacons were appointed at Jerusalem. And it is evident that whatever the subsequent changes in the outer forms of Christianity this continued to be regarded as a fundamental duty of the church. Indeed, it is clear that these activities were increased and given diversity with the growth of the church. That organization contributed materially to this cannot be doubted. As the church grew in numbers it also grew in wealth through the constantly increasing accession of more or less wealthy members, who seem to have been exceedingly liberal in their donations to the church. This aided in the eventual establishment of

[14]Apology 39.
[15]Expansion of Christianity, Vol. I, p. 219.
[16]2 Thessalonians 3:10.

a supported professional clergy, who were thus able to give their entire time to the work of the church and to make its benefactions systematic, the deacons becoming in a sense social welfare workers, attending to the distribution of aid and investigation of cases. But benevolence was by no means confined to the agency of the church. Members made it a rule to give direct assistance to those in need, to "practice loving kindness" as Tertullian says. And individuals able to do so gave large sums to the church or church charities, while rich bequests were frequent. In this way the churches, particularly those in the great cities, such as Rome and Antioch, became custodians and dispensers of considerable wealth. At the close of the fourth century Chrysostom reports that the church at Antioch "supported from its regular budget three thousand widows and virgins, besides ministering to needy people who were in prison, in lodging houses, out of work, strangers in the city, those who waited upon the altar, and others who came daily seeking food and clothing."[17] That such benevolent and truly Christian policies and practices had much to do with the great expansion of the church cannot be doubted. It implanted a new humanitarian spirit in the Roman world that insensibly changed the complexion of its civilization.

Tradition has it that Constantine was moved to give Christianity a legal and privileged status by a vision of a luminous cross in the sky bearing the words "In hoc signo vinces"—by this sign conquer. Whatever may have been the origin of that tradition it is probable that he was influenced more by political than by religious considerations. He realized that Christianity had become a force throughout the empire that had to be reckoned with. So large a proportion of the population had become attached to it that it could not be ignored, and because it was uncompromisingly opposed to the other religions, particularly the official state religion, including the worship of the emperor, it was unintentionally but surely undermining the ancient foundations of the state. That it could not be destroyed had been conclusively proved again and again. The recent failure of

[17]Case, Social Triumph of the Ancient Church, p. 79.

Diocletian in the most extensive and murderous attempt to suppress Christianity was still fresh in the public mind. Constantine had found, in his own experience, and in what he knew of the experience of his father, that Christianity contained intelligent, dependable leaders, inherently loyal to government when their faith was not affected, and while it is difficult to determine whether he was a genuine convert to its teachings (he did not become a Christian formally until he was on his death bed) he was evidently in strong sympathy with them. At any rate, his political sagacity caused him to make an ally rather than an enemy of Christianity. And that decision ushered in an era of freedom, unity and power for the church, which revolutionized its political and social status, making it a little later the controlling force throughout the empire.

For a thousand years thereafter that unity and power continued unbroken, save for the separation from the eastern church. Indeed, its power, materially promoted by the concentration of supreme authority in the Bishop of Rome, distinguished by the exclusive title of Pope, increased until for a long period it was greater than any secular power in Europe. With the decline and disintegration of the Roman Empire, resulting from the seeds of dissolution within itself and the increasing attacks of barbarian hordes from without, the church stood as the one hope and the one security of a vanishing civilization. It supplied a common bond of humanity and preserved a sense of morality, however attenuated, that doubtless prevented Europe from sinking to the levels of primitive savagery in the dark ages that came upon it. That the church itself did not perish is one of the marvels of human history, and it is a reasonable assumption that it must have done so but for the fact that it was a united organization that retained within itself a divine flame which although it burned feebly could not be wholly extinguished.

Nevertheless, the church declined in spiritual purity and in selfless service with the increase in temporal power. These had been the sources of its strength and of its growth during the first three centuries, when it struggled successfully against increasing oppression. With the gradually augmented political

power that passed into its hands after Constantine it became more and more arrogant and more and more moved by material rather than spiritual influences. "Power," it has been wisely said, "always establishes itself through service, and perishes through abuse."[18] That was not said of the church but of feudalism in this particular instance, but it is true in all things. Power abused inevitably sets up a process of self-destruction. The church, to be sure, did not perish but eventually its temporal power vanished.

It was the abuses of this power, and the consequent lowering of the vitality of its spiritual power, which brought on the Protestant reformation. While with the revival of learning and the awakening of the spirit of independent inquiry, beginning in the tenth century, ecclesiastical authorities began to examine and often to question the dogmas of the church, it was the increasing complaints against the administrative abuses of the church, culminating in the widespread and indiscriminate sale of indulgences, that caused the revolution to develop and finally, with Luther, to burst into action. And while as a result of that reformation the Catholic church lost control of a large part of Europe, it caused a counter reformation within itself which gave it a new lease of life, a spiritually greater life than it had possessed for centuries, which it still maintains.

Yet through all these centuries the Christian spirit, the authentic spirit of Jesus Christ, survived, marked by the saintly lives that have filled radiant pages of history, by the charities that continued to be conspicuous activities of the church and its monastic orders, although greatly diminished in volume or in systematic helpfulness from those of the earlier ages; by the elevation of womanhood; and above all by the selfless devotion of countless worshipers within whom burned through all the vicissitudes of the times that same spirit which the early disciples had felt within them and recognized as an emanation from the divine source of good.

The church we now perceive in retrospect has survived and triumphed in two great periods of trial—the period of oppression

[18]Duruy, History of the Middle Ages, p. 201.

and persecution in the first three centuries, and the period of temporal power in the age following the fall of the Roman Empire. In the first, its political weakness was its spiritual strength; in the second, its material power was its spiritual weakness. It triumphed most gloriously and completely in the first when it relied wholly upon its spiritual assets. It lost much, very much, in the second when it relied mainly upon its material power. Yet in the end it triumphed also in this period, for while its spiritual assets were submerged they were far from being destroyed and in time they became again the controlling influences. The church as a whole, although divided, emerged from its second trial purified by the adversities arising from its long experience in the exercise of a material power alien to its nature and inimical to its real welfare, and in the long period of convalescence after a desperate illness it slowly regained the strength and the command of its soul.

If Christianity has now reached another period of severe trial, as many believe, it may feel confident from past experience that whatever the difficulties that confront it the outcome will be victory and progress. Since the reformation Christianity has continued to grow, as it has grown from the beginning, and despite temporary lapses it will continue to grow, for with all its imperfections, all its errors, all its divisions, the spirit of Jesus of Nazareth is still its unfailing motive power.

Chapter XXXI

JESUS IN THIS AGE

We have endeavored in the preceding pages of this volume to present a clear view of the man Jesus in the light of his environment and background; to show what he drew from the past of his race and from his own age, and what he imparted to that and to succeeding ages; and after that to outline briefly the progress of the religion founded upon his personality, his teachings, and his sacrifice.

But, we are told, this is after all but ancient history, interesting enough as history, but having little relevancy to the life of today. Jesus and his religion may have served very well in times past, but this is a new age in which man is confronted by conditions and circumstances, and actuated by ideas, quite different from his time or later times preceding the present. The problems of today, and the motives of today, are of a nature unique in human history. Jesus is obsolete, his teachings are antiquated, and the modern world with its vastly greater knowledge and its far more complex civilization finds them inadequate. A new age needs new principles, new ideals, adapted to its particular requirements.

All this is a pathetic and tragic delusion. The movement of all human history has been through changing conditions and circumstances. Never since man appeared on this planet has there been a period of time not marked by change, and change has ever created new problems that required solution. But history, nonetheless, is a continuous process, a process of evolution in which one period, that may be for various reasons distinguished as an "age," insensibly develops conditions that create, or prepare the way for, another and somewhat different age. Each successive age is a product of preceding ages, and built necessarily upon older foundations. We may for convenience divide history into a series of epochs or eras, and we can show that each one of these epochs was distinguished by certain events, certain developments, certain trends of civilization for-

ward or backward, all creating conditions of human life that in a sense were new because they were different. In that sense every age has been a new age. But every age, no matter how new or different it may appear in some particulars, builds not only upon older foundations but largely with materials inherited from the past. No age, in short, has ever been or ever can be cut off from the past; no age can be created in isolation and out of nothing. Therefore, in the larger sense there is no such thing, and can be no such thing, as a new age.

This present age is, and every age that preceded it was, clearly the product of antecedent conditions, influences, and events. In this, as in every age, there is a large and potent inheritance, for good or ill, from the past. The element of newness in any age is but a difference in the equation of the problem of human existence, which has been the basic problem of mankind since human life began. Altering circumstances give the problem new aspects from time to time, often bewildering and baffling aspects, but the basic problem is ever the same. History, in short, is but a succession of ages, each laying the groundwork for its successor and each developing circumstances more or less novel with which mankind must deal in the solution of the eternal problem of living.

But these changes of circumstances in every age are mainly superficial. That is to say, they affect mainly the externals of human life, the material conditions in which men struggle for existence, for food and shelter and raiment, for comfort and ease, security and advancement—in a word, all the outer things with which men deal in the varied occupations of life, all the material motives which influence their activity. The internals of life, the basic instincts of human nature, the feelings, the emotions, do not change in any age, however new in their outer aspects. That is to say, men and women are fundamentally the same today as they were two thousand years ago, or ten thousand years ago. Their hopes and fears, their griefs and joys, have never changed throughout all the ages. They love or hate, they are moved by base or high emotions now just as they were in prehistoric times. The only instinctive difference between the

man of the present and the man of the days when Ur was in its glory, or even the still more remote Cro-magnon man, is in the external circumstances which affect the application of human nature to the problems of life.

Religion is essentially a matter of the inner man. It deals directly with the human soul, and has no legitimate purpose beyond administering to the needs and the aspirations of the soul. It has no concern with the material externals of life save as they may influence the soul for good or ill. And man in his inner nature being unchanged and unchangeable, however much its exercise may be influenced by religion, or by ethical or social considerations, it follows that ideas and principles of religion that have received general sanction in one age may be fully as valid and as serviceable in another, regardless of the differences in external circumstances. To be sure, the validity of a religion must be continuously tested by the best and highest thought of mankind. It has no right to survival unless it can meet that progressive testing. It can be truthfully said that the religion of Jesus Christ has met that testing successfully, triumphantly, through all the vicissitudes of the ages since he lived on earth. That it is as competent to meet the soul needs of this day as of any other past day is a conviction that can be fully justified by the historical record of its service, and by its fitness to meet the soul requirements of human nature under all circumstances.

It is a reasonable assumption that man always needs, and must have, some sort of religion. No people have ever existed, so far as can be discovered, who did not have at least a rudimentary form of worship, some conception, however vague, of a power or powers superior to man which somehow exercised an influence upon their lives, powers which they instinctively feared and as instinctively adored. This being a universal tendency in man in all ages and under all conditions warrants the belief that it is a natural propensity; that there is something within man that constantly reaches out to such powers and in turn derives something from them that promotes man's welfare. It seems incredible that mankind through all the ages would have persisted in maintaining ideas and forms of religious worship if there had

not been an instinctive feeling that it supplied an indispensable requirement of human life. And it is a significant fact that as man has advanced in culture, in knowledge, and in the exercise of the highest qualities of reason, religion, far from being abandoned as vain superstition, has been upheld and supported as essential to his well-being. To be sure, we are observing, in this age of experimentation, a vast experiment in the suppression of religion by a great nation. But it is yet to be proved that this can be permanently accomplished, and the experience of the human race through all time indicates that this experiment is bound to fail.

It is, furthermore, a necessary assumption that, as above implied, religion must be based upon some conception of a supernatural power or powers. There is no such thing, and can be no such thing, as a religion unrelated to the idea of deity. We often hear it said in these days that God-denying humanism, or Communism, is a form of religion. The word in such association is obviously misplaced. Webster's definition is accurate and complete. Religion, he says, is "the outward act or form by which men indicate their recognition of the existence of a god or of gods having power over their destiny, to whom obedience, service and honor are due; the feeling or expression of human love, fear or awe of some superhuman or overruling power, whether by profession or belief, by observance of rites and ceremonies, or by the conduct of life; a system of faith and worship." Religion, therefore, has no proper meaning except in relation to a conception of the supernatural, and that conception, for the greater part, or at least for the more important part, of the civilized world, is, and long has been, the idea of a single Being, supreme in the Universe, which, in the English tongue, is called God.

God, it must be admitted, is an idea, or an ideal, unproved and unprovable by laboratory demonstration. God is, or is not. If not, then any discussion of religion is irrelevant, and all the work of all the religious leaders, and the faith of all the devoted millions of mankind, vain. But there is abundant evidence in nature and in human experience, evidence supported by reason as well

as instinct, that God is. And if he is, then he is the center and circumference of all things, the one supreme factor in human existence; and religion, essentially related as it is to him, becomes the most important subject of all human discussion, the profoundest objective of human thought, the most essential influence in human life. Moreover, if God is, and if he is deeply concerned in human life as his highest creation, then he is not only interested in the course of human history but somehow participates in it and seeks to guide it into right channels. It is only in the long perspective that this guidance can be discovered but there it seems to be clearly visible. "The truth of the matter is that human society does exist, grow and change within the encompassing, enastening, inexorable grip of the rule of God. . . . The long story of mankind's pilgrimage is living demonstration of God in history. To eyes alert to discern its deeper significance it reveals the constraint, the guidance, the impulse of the moral structure of reality, the principles of the Divine Commonwealth."[1] And if this guidance can be discerned in the past it is a necessary assumption that it is not withheld now. God surely has not withdrawn from the Universe; neither has he ceased to concern himself in the affairs of mankind. Whatever the changes in the conditions or the aspects of human life it is inconceivable that he could change. We must believe, if we believe at all, that he is the same today that he was in the dawn ages of mankind, and that through all eternity he "slumbers not nor sleeps."

Belief in God as a loving Father, and faith in his fostering care, is the first, the most essential, principle of the religion taught by Jesus. But there is a second principle, woven in, inextricably associated, with the first. That is the fact that all men, as children of God, are spiritual brothers, and that the relations of men with one another should be in accord with this conception of divine kinship, manifested in justice, in fairness, in kindly consideration of one another, moved by some finite measure of that good will that God bestows upon mankind. This also is the teaching of Jesus. The two principles together form the perfect,

[1]Van Dusen, God in These Times, pp. 111-116.

the complete, conception of religion, which needs no addition, no amendment, to make it as applicable, as fully adequate, to this age as to any age in the past. In all the centuries since Jesus lived on earth, no question has had so much profound and earnest thought applied to it as to this, yet no way of improving it has been discovered, no alteration of it has been suggested that received or merited intelligent approval. These two fundamental principles encompass all that is needful in religion. To be sure, they have been often obscured, often submerged, in the conflict of opinions over subsidiary if not irrelevant questions, at no time have they ever been perfectly and completely observed or applied to human relations, but they stand nonetheless as the immovable, the unchanging Constitution of the religion of God.

This completeness and perfection of fundamental principles is one reason for the conviction that Jesus was a unique agency for the revelation of the nature of God, of His attitude toward man, and of His desire for a similar attitude of men toward Him and toward their fellows. But there are other reasons no less impressive. We have spoken of the circumstances which made the time of the advent of Jesus singularly propitious, as if the world had somehow been prepared for his coming. It seems beyond question that, as we have said, "no period in human history could have been chosen in which the political, social, and religious conditions were so favorably disposed for the revelation which he embodied, or for the spread of his teachings." If God has any influence upon human history at any time it must have been exercised particularly in the direction of conditions favorable to an event so exceptional in its spiritual significance and purpose as the appearance of one so peculiarly representative of deity as Jesus seems to have been. Moreover, as we have also said, such a being with such a message and such a conception of deity could have come only from the Jewish race, for no other had the necessary background, foundation, and preparation; and this race had been led by various prophecies to expect a divinely endowed deliverer or savior at or about this time.

Jesus was the literal fulfillment of one of these prophecies, although it was one that had made least impress upon their im-

aginations, which seemed indeed to deny the realization of their fondest hopes for material glory. The prophecy of the Second Isaiah, expressed particularly in the fifty-third chapter of the Book of Isaiah, pictured a suffering servant rather than a conquering warrior, and it appeared utterly incredible that God should exercise His authority and power through one whom He Himself doomed to sacrifice. How was it possible that men could be saved by a dying Savior? How was it possible that one of such lowly condition as described in the prophecy, despised and condemned of men, could express the might and majesty of God? The notion seemed preposterous. Yet in the literal fulfillment of that strange prophecy Jesus proved not only that it was possible but that it was the one way by which God could be revealed to man, and His power over the minds and hearts of men made most effective for human good.

We know nothing about this greatest of all the prophets, the so-called Second Isaiah, other than can be gleaned from his writings, or recorded utterances, which are incorporated with those of the original Isaiah. That he lived in the period of the Babylonian captivity is apparent from his references to events. It is enough for our present purposes to say that the time of his prophecies was some centuries before the birth of Jesus. But somehow this mystical genius had conceived the idea of a lowly being who would be God's agent in redeeming Israel through his sacrifice. He felt that it was God himself who revealed this to him, and he so declared. Now this would be only another of the strange visions of the prophets and of the apocalyptic writers, but for the fact that precisely such a being as he described, with such a divine mission, did appear several centuries later in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, and that this being did by his voluntary sacrifice become a Savior of mankind. It is difficult to believe that here again was mere coincidence. This prophet clearly foresaw the one that was to come, foresaw the manner of man he was to be, and the nature and effect of the purposes of God in relation to him. And this vision was so contrary to all the expectations, all the hopes of the race, that it is inexplicable unless it was indeed, as this prophet was convinced,

an emanation from God. But if so it indicates the long sweep of God's plan for the revelation of Himself to humanity, and the infinite scope of the preparation for the consummation of His plan. Jesus then, if this assumption is correct, was not a fortuitous phenomenon in the progress of human history, but one who was held in the divine design for ages, and who, in "the fulness of time," as Paul expresses it, should appear as a man among men to fulfill the purposes of God in relation to mankind. One may doubt the verity of Luke's story of the angels heralding the birth of Jesus, but surely the occasion warranted some such supernal announcement, some declaration of heaven's concern in an event of such surpassing, such unique, importance to humanity.

And the wonder of this, explain it how we will, is greatly increased by the historical records of the facts of Jesus' life, his incomparable character, his incomparable teachings, and the immeasurable consequences of his brief existence. It is a fact beyond question that there appearanced in the province of Galilee, in the time of Tiberius Caesar, a young man of humble circumstances, a carpenter, who within the few months of his public career inaugurated a new dispensation in the spiritual progress of mankind, a religion that swept across the civilized world with amazing rapidity and invincible power; that it triumphed over all the efforts of the might of Rome to destroy or even to check it; that within little more than three centuries it had overcome all opposition, had virtually extinguished all the pagan religions then in existence, and had made itself supreme everywhere. And this was done without the aid of any material force, without any of the powers of office or of wealth, with no influence but its inherent merit and the spirit of that unique personality in which it had its origin, that carpenter of Nazareth who was without social eminence, without political support, without economic resources, and whose life was ended on a felon's cross when he was but little more than thirty years of age. And it is no less true beyond question that for nineteen hundred years this man has been the dominating spirit in the moral structure of civilization, the one pervading influence in all moral progress, the spiritual leader of mankind through all its vicissitudes. There is no

miracle comparable with this. If this man was not God's agent, God-inspired, God-directed, how is it possible to account for him, his character, his teachings, and the vast and enduring consequences of his life and sacrificial death?

Is it conceivable then that the religion of Jesus is obsolete or obsolescent in this present age? Is it conceivable that if there is a God He can be overwhelmed by the complexity of human circumstances, no longer able to meet the spiritual needs of humanity? Can it be possible that He, a Being of infinite power, the creator and constant director of the universe, whose age is from "everlasting to everlasting," can have become so enervated by human events as to become inadequate or incompetent? Most certainly not. He is either eternally all-sufficient, always omniscient, or He is nothing. That is the alternative—God is all or God is nothing. Suppose the world should decide to eliminate the idea of God from all reckoning, even as Russia is attempting to do. What, if this were possible, would be the consequences? Doubtless it would move along for a time without realizing its disaster, carried forward by the moral momentum of accumulated ages in which God's guidance was recognized. But the spiritual foundations of human existence would be destroyed, spiritual endeavor would cease to have its highest motive. Moral standards would slowly disintegrate. The loftier aspirations of mankind would disappear. Whatever its physical achievements humanity would descend to the level of the beast, without conscience, without the finer emotions that kindle the spark of divinity within the human breast, without hope either of heaven or a better earth. There would be no comfort for sorrow, no moral aid for affliction, no divine resources of strength upon which to draw in adversity. The darkness of night would descend upon civilization and unrelievable despair would be the common lot of man. No; it is either God or chaos.

But if God, what then? Faith in him, trust in him, is the supreme need of humanity, now and ever. Mankind must, it seems, from time to time pass through deep shadows on its way to regions of light. It is in such times that faith in God is most essential to fortitude, most necessary to the maintenance of that

strength of purpose, that clear understanding of the evanescence of such shadows, that firm determination to carry on to the best of human ability until the gloom disappears, which are the requirements of progress in the midst of bewildering difficulties. So long as that trust in Divine Providence exists, however suppressed and inarticulate it may become in the confusion of adverse circumstances, there is not only hope but there is assurance of light beyond, into which humanity will emerge chastened and weakened by its experience but ready and able to gird itself for a renewed advance to higher ground and happier conditions.

Faith in God, however, is difficult to maintain—particularly in adverse circumstances, when He has seemed to have withdrawn Himself from earthly affairs, or has indeed seemed to become an unfriendly Being condemning man to wander unaided in darkness—unless there is at hand a tangible expression of His being, His purposes and His fostering care, something that the mind and heart of man can lay hold of as a solid rock in the midst of a boundless sea, something within the finite comprehension of man that can make the nature and the ways of God understandable. That, it appears, is the function of Jesus Christ in the relations of God to mankind. Through this man of Nazareth, as through no other, God reveals Himself, His attributes, His infinite love, and His designs. In the spiritual perfection of this Jesus He seems to have embodied Himself, so that man could discern His form and lineaments, as it were, and realize that He is akin to themselves, not in reality some remote and incomprehensible Being, but a loving Father who is ever near and ever responsive to man's spiritual needs. At any rate, it is clear that through nineteen centuries Jesus has made such a conception of God available to the world, and mankind has been tremendously benefited thereby.

This conception has for ages been accepted as complete and conclusive by that great and predominant portion of the human race that counts itself Christian, and the remaining portion has no alternative of comparable value to offer. If, then, religion is essential to human welfare, no substitute for the Christian religion is conceivable that would meet the needs of the present

day with any greater adequacy or efficiency than the Christian religion, or indeed with any approach to equal sufficiency. That, assuming the necessity of religion of some sort, seems to be beyond question. To be sure, Christianity as it exists today and as it has existed for centuries is far from perfection, far from the ideas and ideals of its founder. However divine its origin or the spirit that hovers over it, it is a human institution, and it is permeated, both in its organized and its individual application, with the defects of human nature, influenced too often and too largely by material interests. Yet it is nonetheless true that it expresses in no small degree the religion of Jesus, that it upholds and maintains it, that it regards his principles as the standards of right in human conduct, their perfect attainment as the highest goal of human endeavor, and that its followers more or less sincerely, according to individual tendencies, worship the God whom he revealed. Moreover, imperfect though it is, and has ever been, it is the most potent force in the moral advancement of the world. Obliterate all the churches, and all the institutions that are the product of Christian principles, and the foundations of the moral structure of civilization would be irretrievably shattered. In short, if Christianity were rejected and wiped out, assuming that were possible, there would be nothing to take its place, no agency of comparable value and resourcefulness to meet the spiritual requirements of human nature, and mankind would be spiritually bankrupt. Furthermore, the clear indications that Christianity is of divine origin, that its founder was indeed an instrument of God, and that in his teachings he spoke as it were with the voice of God, make it inconceivable that any substitute for it could be devised that would be of either moral or material benefit to man in any comparable degree.

The Christian religion is for these reasons imperishable and any effort to extinguish it must be utterly futile and morally disastrous. It is in its essentials the perfect religion, fully adequate to any human emergency, competent to meet any conditions, however trying, in which mankind by its own mistakes becomes involved, the only hope for the salvation of man. Its

faults, its weaknesses, its errors, are not derived from its source, or from the eternal spirit that constantly breathes life into it, but from the incapacity of human nature as yet to apply it and to practice it in the perfection which is its ultimate goal, the universal Kingdom of God. Humanity has much to learn and far to go before it can even approach the full attainment of that divine ideal, but slowly it is learning, and its most impressive lessons come not from periods of ease and comfort but from the experiences of adversity. God, through Jesus of Nazareth, has shown the way, and although it is difficult to follow it in the manifold complexities of human affairs, an unfailing Compass has been supplied which points the right direction and gives constant assurance that man's destination, however remote, can yet be reached. Faith in God, let it be repeated, unshakable trust in his care and guidance, far more than political devices for economic restoration or social welfare, is the supreme need of this age, as of every age.

Mankind indeed is suffering from a lamentable deficiency in faith—faith in itself, faith in the institutions it has long sustained, faith in the principles that have dominated the conduct of the past, faith in the validity of its own experience, faith in the values of its inheritance, faith in the verity of its traditions, faith in God, faith in anything. And lacking faith its lacks stability, direction, fixed purposes; is perplexed by uncertainties, beset by illusions, prone to follow any self-created leadership that is generous with promises of security and abundance. It sees governments violating their most solemn pledges with impunity, institutions that have represented the highest standards of conduct absorbed in material ends with little concern for spiritual objectives; it sees honesty and virtue and thrift regarded with contempt as old-fashioned attributes; it sees crime flourishing as never before. In brief, it has lost its bearings, is adrift as it were upon a troubled sea, in a vessel without rudder or compass or pilot. A restoration of faith in general is essential to the recovery of its confidence, its equilibrium, its stability, the determination of its course; and the basis of all faith is faith in God as the source of man's spiritual aspirations, the moving

influence upon man's conscience, the fountain head of virtue, truth, and honor. It gives man a sense of obligation to paths of righteousness, a realization of duty to his fellows, a consciousness of ethical requirements and ethical values. And because it enables one to see the spark of divinity in all men, to recognize the spiritual kinship of all, and to appreciate the better qualities of human nature, it inspires and supports faith in human relations, faith in the inherent honesty of the great majority of God's creatures. Faith in God, that is to say, fosters faith in man, a better understanding of moral values and spiritual objectives, and constantly promotes a better ordering of civilization. And nineteen centuries' experience has abundantly proved that the one unfailing guide to and support of faith in God is Jesus of Nazareth, whose spirit through all the ages since he walked the highways of Galilee has been a continuous inspiration to mankind, a pervading influence for its upward advancement.

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